DRUUNA IS BACK IN "THE FORGOTTEN PLANET"!

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HEAVY METAL

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THE MATURE ILLUSTRATED FANTASY MAGAZINE

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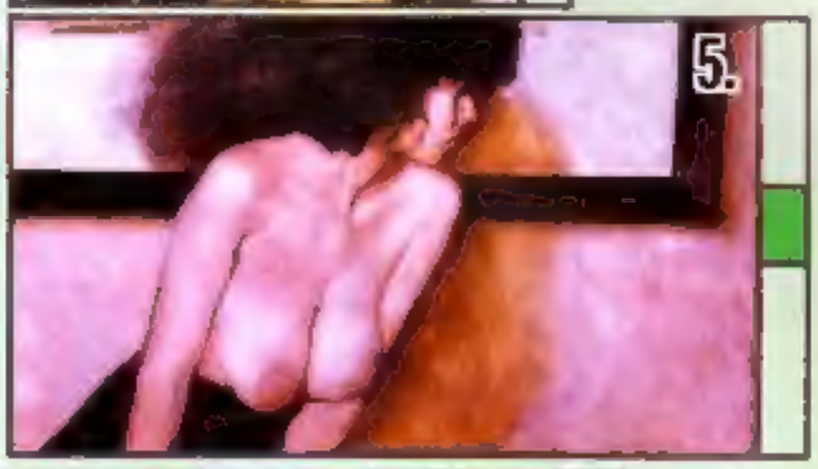

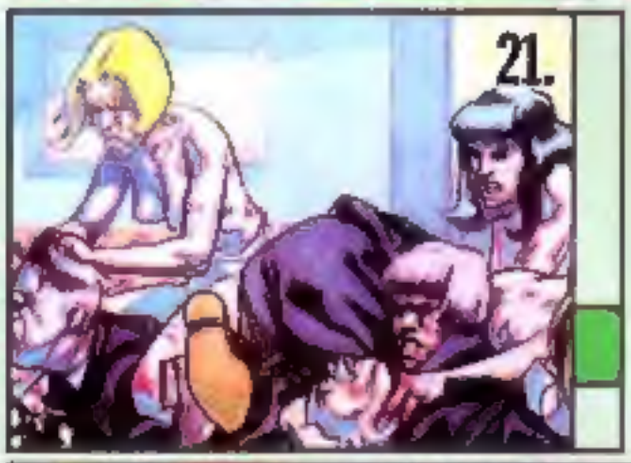

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A Bit of Theory... ©VentsD'Ouest. Why HAve Sex? ©Vest D'Ouest. Angel Dust ©Editions Albin Michel. The Forgotten Planet ©Bagheera Editeur Paris. 2000

Publishers Note

Have you ever felt like you've had the same dream over and over again? Drifting in a landscape you can't shake the weird "déjà vu" of, and suddenly you find yourself beginning to question which one was the dream and which one was not? It seems you're lost and all you want to find is home, love and peace...

What kind of hell would that be? (Or is the artist telling us a little bit about what the "real world" offers up to most of us?)

To Druuna, who has been trapped in this run-down, futuristic "nasty" place filled with only sex minded mutants, ex-lovers, and evil sex fiend doctors for nearly 15 (Heavy Metal) years... a nightmare is the only answer for such unpleasantness... or is it?

For loyal Heavy Metal readers and other fans of Druuna, after six graphic novels and four supporting "Art Of" books, this masterpiece is only scratching the surface of some deeper meaning we are all looking for. Each volume continues to regularly sell out, and head back for reprints, again and again and again. It's either that or we all just really like the way Serpieri draws her butt...

As one of the biggest Druuna fans--- and "NO" I'm not really sure why, but I look forward to what might happen next, and most times even when it's nothing new, it is still okay. Druuna rocks...

I once met the creator and artist - - Serpieri at a convention in France and he was exactly as I envisioned... When I said hello, introduced myself, (which is funny because he doesn't speak a word of English) and shook his hand, he never once looked at me- - he couldn't take his eyes off my wife. Exactly as I envisioned, and I'm thrilled he's part of the Heavy Metal legend.

In addition to the return of our dear Druuna, we have a classic Liberatore story, plus Simon Bisley returns with the first part of an all new series- Fistfull Of Blood. To round out this kick ass issue, we welcome back (with the second cover in a year!) my pal Lorenzo on the cover, and new guys Philip Xavier and Langdon Foss tip the hat to the classic styling of old school Heavy Metal with their adventures and much, much more.

Okay folks, that's enough rambling from me for this month - - keep those cards and letters coming. I look forward to all your thoughts.

Kip Eastman

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Letters to The Editor

Send Letters To: Heavy Metal, 100 Merrick Road, Suite 400, East Building, Rockville Centre, NY 11570

Dear H.M.,

Finally the content is coming back. For well over a year this die-hard fan was troubled. Troubled by the lack of content. The stories seemed to be completely geared for T&A. I was even at moments embarrassed to have this magazine on my table. But over the past year or so I have been surprised by some truly fantastic content. Please, please give me more. You're one of the few magazines I enjoy. One I can get all over the world. I want stories that stimulate my brain and the artwork should seed the mental images that flood into me when a truly wonderful story graces the pages.
Mark

Dear Mark,

Thanks, it's always tough for me to find the right balance, but a challenge I do enjoy. I get a wide variety of material to pick from and I try to incorporate "it" into every issue. If an issue has too much nudity or too much sci-fi or too much of anything, 50% of the fans love it, 50% hate it and I get letters to back it up. All I can say is thanks for caring and keep those letters coming.

Dear H.M.,

I was wondering a few things about Heavy Metal. First, will Frank Frazetta be featured in Heavy Metal in the near future? Second, I've collected Heavy Metal for years now and I have recently noticed that your comics have really mellowed out. In the 70's and 80's there was more sex and nudity in them, but now they are more like any other comic you can buy off the shelf. Third, I just purchased your 20th anniversary hard cover book and while I was looking through it, I started thinking of another good book that I believe everyone would enjoy seeing from you. How about a hard cover book with all of the magazine covers from the first issue to the most recent issue.
Randa

Dear Randa,

I wish we could see more Frazetta work in or out of Heavy Metal - - he's the greatest. But, he's given us all he can, and we'll forever love him for it. As for the magazine, I try to mix up each issue's content- - Hang in there, I hope we'll come up with something you'll like (see Druuna this issue!). Great idea about the book of Heavy Metal covers- - great minds think alike... it will be out next year.

Dear H.M.,

I just finished reading the Fall 2000 Special and I was VERY impressed. It seems that you guys used to be about great fantasy artwork. Lately your magazine seems like a show of flesh, it just doesn't have the impact it once did. I found the Fall 2000 Special to be a refreshing break from that. I hope that you continue to produce your fine publication but still keep to the tradition of the old ways.
Patrick

Dear Patrick,

Thanks- and if I had one complaint it would be that we have 96 more pages of "A Bit Of Madness" and it will take us another 18 months to get all of it out there! So hang with us... it's as good, if not better than the first installment.

Dear H.M.,

I am a subscriber and a great Serpieri fan. I just received his newest book, "The Sweet Smell Of Woman" from you. I have all his books and like the rest, this is beautifully done and I am glad to add it to my collection. However, the big question is when are we going to see something new. I know DRUUNA is going to be tough to match and exceeding it probably impossible, but we need THE FUTURE ADVENTURES OF... in a different time or place maybe, but we need STORIES!! Short stories or long doesn't matter and more beautiful artwork. Horror of horrors! He hasn't retired, has he?
Vagrant

Dear Vagrant,

Man, how timely your letter is! I was going through the stack of letters and found your note on Druuna, in an issue where Druuna has returned. So, he hasn't retired, but the adventure continues in the classic sense... if you catch my drift!

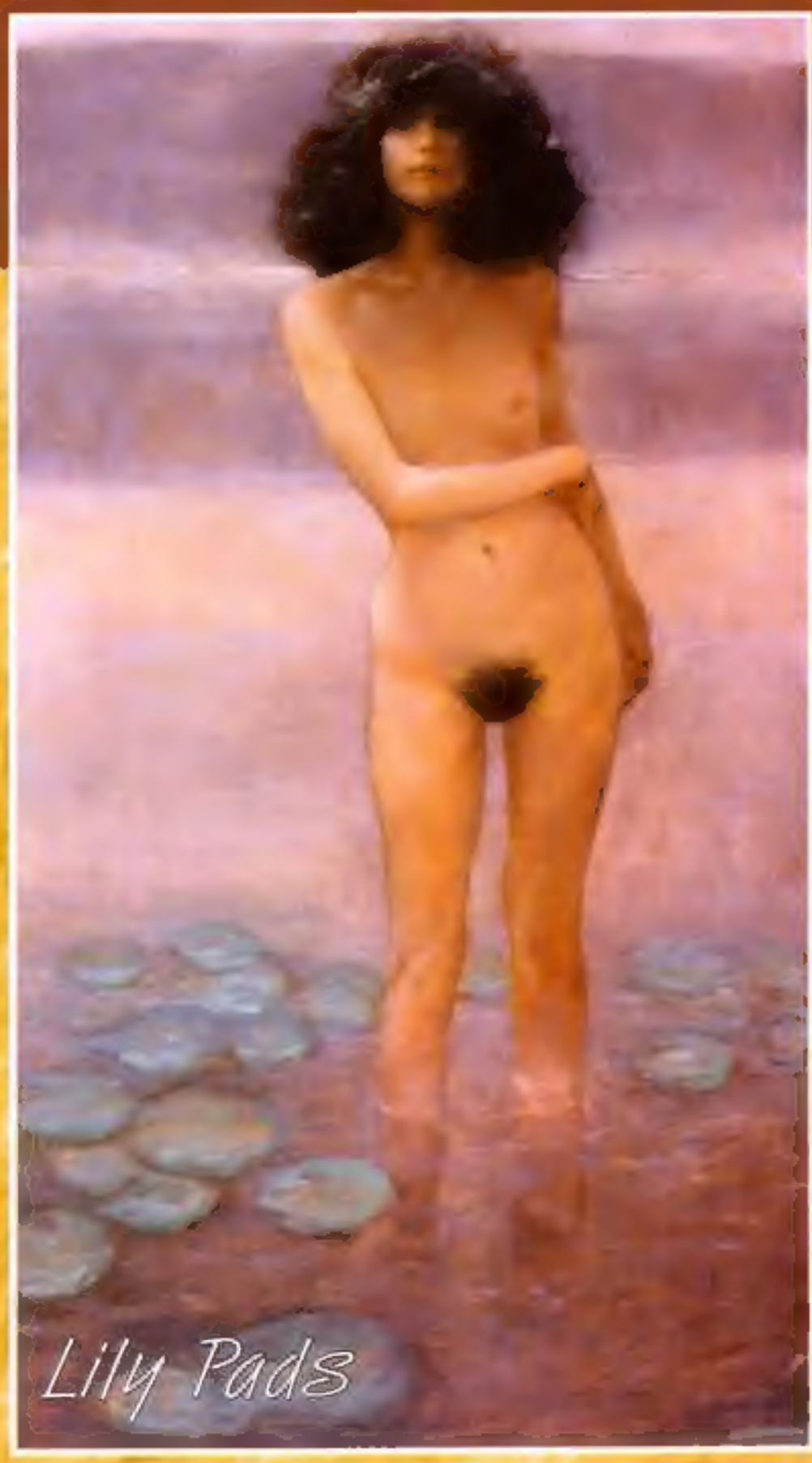
GALLERY

Standing Mermaid

Camelback

Wading

Keyhole


Lily Pads

At Rest

Tarzan Rescues the Moon

Beauty and the Beast

Bells

Herr Mermaid

Winslow Skull

Roman Charge

To see more of Jeff's work, check out his website:
www.jeffreyjones.com

DOSSIER

Jeff Jones can best be described as the poet laureate of contemporary fantasy painters, although Jones, sensitive artiste that he is, assuredly hates being pigeonholed in any way. A prolific and popular paperback cover artist in his early years, he also created illustrations for sci-fi pulps, fanzines, magazines and even occasionally drew comics for mainstream publishers. Old-time *Heavy Metal* readers may have seen his "I'm Age" strips from the 1980's, while *National Lampoon* fans fondly recall Jones' obscure and beautiful "Idyl". As a cover painter, Jones illustrated so many different novels and series that it would take an entire Dossier column to list everything, but to mention only a few: a score of different Robert E. Howard volumes, Lin Carter's Thongor series, Gardner Fox's Kothar, Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, as well as books by Andre Norton, Thomas Burnett Swann, Edgar Rice Burroughs and many, many others.

Jones renounced commercial art in 1976, and with his friends, Bernie Wrightson, Michael Kaluta and Barry Windsor-Smith, formed The Studio, with the avowed purpose of creating an artistic synergy among these four vibrant young talents. Together the quartet produced The Studio (1977) a gorgeous collection of their best work to that date. The Studio demonstrated that Jones, et al., had far transcended the comics medium. What Jones produced couldn't be called illustration, and was far too romantic to be called fine art by modernist critics. As always, Jones forged ahead, following his own path.

Jones retreated from New York City to live in Woodstock, and there made his living from portfolios, limited edition prints, and selling off his originals, while continuing to explore and refine his own style. His most recent public offering was last year's Jeff Jones Sketchbook published by Vanguard. Co-designed by Jones and fellow painter George Pratt, it's easily the most beautiful of Vanguard's series of sketchbooks*. Dossier caught up with Jones via the Internet to catch up with this visual master craftsman's past, present and future of Jeff Jones' artistic endeavors...

JEFF JONES TRANSCRIPT
(Interview Conducted 1/2001)

HM: Jeff, let's start by talking about some of your early work, the comic strips Idyll, and I'm Age, which you did for National Lampoon and Heavy Metal respectively. What were you trying to do with those strips? Were you trying to say something obscure and profound, or were they just an excuse to draw some beautiful pictures?

JONES: My general intent in both strips was to explore the difference between men and women. The only real difference between IDYL and I'M AGE is that in the former men were generally represented by animals or objects and in the latter there were no males present. IDYL was intended as satire and whimsy. One art director and one editor, who met me each month with puzzled faces, continued to remind me that NATIONAL LAMPOON was a humor magazine. "As long as YOU laugh" they finally said. So each month I would go in laughing. I also must admit that also I love to draw nude women.

HM: You also did a smattering of mainstream comics work in the early days for Warren, DC, and Charlton, and for magazines, and underground comics, though not a lot in comparison to contemporaries such as Kaluta and Wrightson. Why didn't you do more sequential art? Is it because you didn't like the comics medium, or because you were more interested in painting?

JONES: I love the comics medium. And I also love single narrative pictures. They both tell a story, though comics also employs words. The use of words and pictures together is a vastly unexplored and exciting realm. I am currently working on a new strip idea, PEEZEL MEEPS, which uses "funny animals." I guess making pictures has always been my first love and drawing or painting them is what I am inspired to do. I once did a painted comics story.

HM: On that subject, what was it like in the early days, hanging around with Kaluta, Wrightson, Alan Weiss and the other young Turks of comics? What are your favorite memories from the early days, of making the transition from fan to pro?

JONES: Oh, there are way too many memories to convey here. Let's just say that to have been among all the young, aspiring and creative energies at the time was like being on a runaway train. One could not not work. Early one morning, I mean before sunrise, I walked into the Studio I shared at that time with Kaluta, Windsor-Smith, and Wrightson. It must have been sometime in 1978, I think, because by that time Michael and I had all but moved into the Studio, visiting our apartments occasionally only to pick up the mail. We would cross paths about this time of day because I slept at night and Michael slept... well in 1978 he was a very important sleeper. On this memorable morning, as I opened the big horizontal steel lock on the big steel door, I found Michael crouched behind his drawing table, now swung into a vertical position, with a gun. A pistol. "Welcome to 'Desolation Row'", he said as he peered with one eye over the top of the table. I have to back up a month to say what led up to this seeming desperate situation. From the time we moved into the Studio in June of 1976, Michael came some months later, we heard scurrying noises in the quiet hours of the night. Mice. Well, at first some of us thought they were cute and some of us didn't. By the time the mice added chewing on artwork, stacks of posters and electrical cords to their scurrying, (one mouse was discovered stiff and dead with it's teeth still clamped to an extension cord) we all decided they weren't cute anymore. But we being peaceful children of the sixties, "death to the mice" was not an immediate option. It was decided that the answer was 'Have a Heart' traps that would capture them alive. Then what? Well, Michael and I acquired an aquarium to house the mice in, sort of like pets. We couldn't find authentic 'Have a Heart' traps but got some pirated copies at the local hardware store. Needless to say, these didn't always work properly. Some mice would get caught, some would get away, and a few we would find dead or almost dead with a trap door pinning their rear ends halfway out into the room. The mice we caught Michael and I would put into the aquarium and feed peanut butter. One midnight when we decided the aquarium was full enough, Michael and I took it down the elevator from our 12th floor aerie to the lobby and out into the night. Across the street we went, feeling for all the world like saviors of mice, to an empty parking lot. Buildings rose tall and dark on all sides of us and I guess we wondered where the mice would end up. But that would be somebody else's problem. As we tipped over the aquarium with a stick, all the mice swarmed out into the night. Yes, swarmed. They moved as a herd, a dark mass, back across the street and back into our building. Michael had been sitting for hours behind his drawing board

with his pistol, a BB gun, watching, as a mouse would creep along the far wall beneath the radiators. "The BBs don't really kill them," he explained. "They just get stunned." "What do you do with them," I asked. "I put them in a paper bag and drop them out the 12th floor window," he smiled.

HM: I know the late Vaughn Bode was a friend of yours, and that you collaborated a few times. Was Vaughn much of an artistic influence, or more of a personal influence?

JONES: Vaughn was an influence in that he was driven and pushed himself to explore himself.

HM: In your early years, you were an amazingly prolific cover artist. Approximately how many paintings do you think you've executed to date? Have you managed to hang on to many of your oils? Are there any that you just couldn't bear to part with? Also, what are your own personal favorites among your paintings and why?

JONES: First, I have no favorites. To have any would be like Sophie's Choice. My "child" is always the one I'm currently working on. I have virtually none of my originals on hand because having then around can stunt my growth as an artist. I want to grow and change as an artist, not plagiarize myself. And there is no way I can say how many paintings I've done; it must be way over a thousand.

HM: There is a definite stylistic evolution apparent in your work. Did your style change because you became aware of different influences, because your technique improved, or because your philosophy about your work changed?

JONES: All of the above.

HM: You said in the interview in your recently published sketchbook that you didn't like doing concept sketches for art directors any more. Does this mean you're not doing any more commercial art commissions? Do you think you will ever do another series of book covers like your Robert E. Howard covers for Zebra Press in the late 70s?

JONES: Well, you never know; though it is my firm opinion that illustration is immoral. Yes, I am a former illustrator and immoralist. I've encountered illustrators who claim to elevate the text (what egotism!), or even just to add to it. It is a rare case that an author leaves his work incomplete, awaiting illustrations. Most illustrations give us a picture of what the author has written and this inevitably is a theft of the imagination of the reader. This is not to say that many illustrations are not Art, they are just misplaced. I do, however, approve of an artist's interpretation of ideas.

HM: What are you doing with your work now? Is your focus more fine art-oriented these days? Will you discuss your latest projects and plans for the future?

JONES: I'm not sure what "fine art" is. Each day I get up and paint or draw. I want nothing more than to do just this. My attention seems now to be focused on today and I have no idea about the future. Years ago I had goals (to get to this or that place), and when I did I found that all I wanted to do was art. So I have given up goals. When I was young my passion was art, eventually comic book and fantasy art. I've seen a lot of people lose their childhood passions, not only for art but for life--just getting squeezed. My passion was and is my art. However, there was a time when I became aware that I might be losing it. Having used my ability to draw to buy approval from my childhood peers, I entered the real world with my "cash" in my pocket. I wanted to be published so badly that in the beginning I took on a lot of work that I hated. Ah, but maybe a million people would see it and love me. I lived in fear. What happened? I found that the more I went to the drawing board or the easel to do work I hated, the less I wanted to go there. I was losing my joy, and I found eventually that my joy was more important than approval. I began to get "difficult to deal with" and began to lose jobs. I became determined to, well, not so much "have it my way," but to do work I loved. It's not so easy to pursue, or even know what your heart's desire may be.

HM: You have a beautiful website up, Jeff. Is that your primary avenue for selling your work? Are you working with a gallery or agent(s)?

JONES: Thank you. That would be *http://www.jeffreyjones.com.* I sell from my site, and by doing private commissions. I continue also to do the occasional work for publication, usually for independent publishers.

HM: Your work frequently depicts beautiful, delicate women in a style reminiscent of the great Romantic painters. Why are you so drawn to painting women in this style?

JONES: I am a romantic and a painter and I love women. If you go to museums, you'll find there mostly paintings of women, by both men and women. The female form just reflects light so simply and beautifully.

HM: Are you consciously trying to convey certain themes in your work? If so, what themes are you trying to articulate?

JONES: There are no themes that I know of in my work.

HM: Your early work is full of fantasy imagery--barbarians, wizards, etc. Was that because of the books you were assigned to illustrate, or because that was what you were interested in painting at the time?

JONES: I am interested in human nature and I feel that confining it to "reality" presents a timeliness and not a timelessness.

HM: Can you describe, in however much detail you'd like, how you go from an idea to finished work (painting, drawing, etc.)

JONES: When I paint, I do no preliminaries. I find that the more concrete an idea I have for a painting the more I don't want to paint, it seems already done. My paintings take shape and form as I go along. I have no real idea what the finish will look like. It's like authors who say that at some point the characters take on a life of their own. The painting and I have a kind of "conversation" where control is let go. We "listen" to each other. This is exciting. Drawings are similar.

HM: Please describe how you create a painting, say a large-scale work such as "Blind Narcissus." For instance, would you work with a live model posing for you, or take photos and work from those, or do you do it directly from your imagination?

JONES: I use everything I can get my hands and heart on, models, photography, and a lot of imagination.

HM: In general, do you use photographic reference?

JONES: I used to work from imagination alone but soon found that when I did this I inevitably developed formulas--a knee looks like this and an arm looks like that. When I work from life (or photos when the model has time constraints) I can see that, with subtleties, every foot, every neck, every leg is different.

HM: You mentioned PEEZLE MEEPS, the new comic strip you're working up. If you have enough of it done, how about sharing a sample with us for the gallery section?

JONES: Right now, I am in the creative stages of it.

**For info on ordering the Jones Sketchbook and others, check out the Vanguard website: http://www.creativemix.com/vanguard/)*

GALACTIC GEOGRAPHIC SPECIAL

Historic First Contact

A famous encounter is revisited for our annual issue.

Chosen for the cover of our Annual from all the images in the Galactic Geographic archives, "First Contact" typifies the spirit of our organization; human and extraterrestrial intelligences united in the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

The image, recorded in the year 3000, documents a young Federation's chance encounter with an alien civilization. In the picture three crew members from the sub-light cruiser *Magellan* meet three alien crewmen.

Writes retired Commander John Wysor, former captain of the *Magellan*, "We detected something that we first took to be an asteroid, but we knew that regions of star formation like this one seldom have rocky debris. Of course once we tracked it at fractional light speed we knew it was a ship.

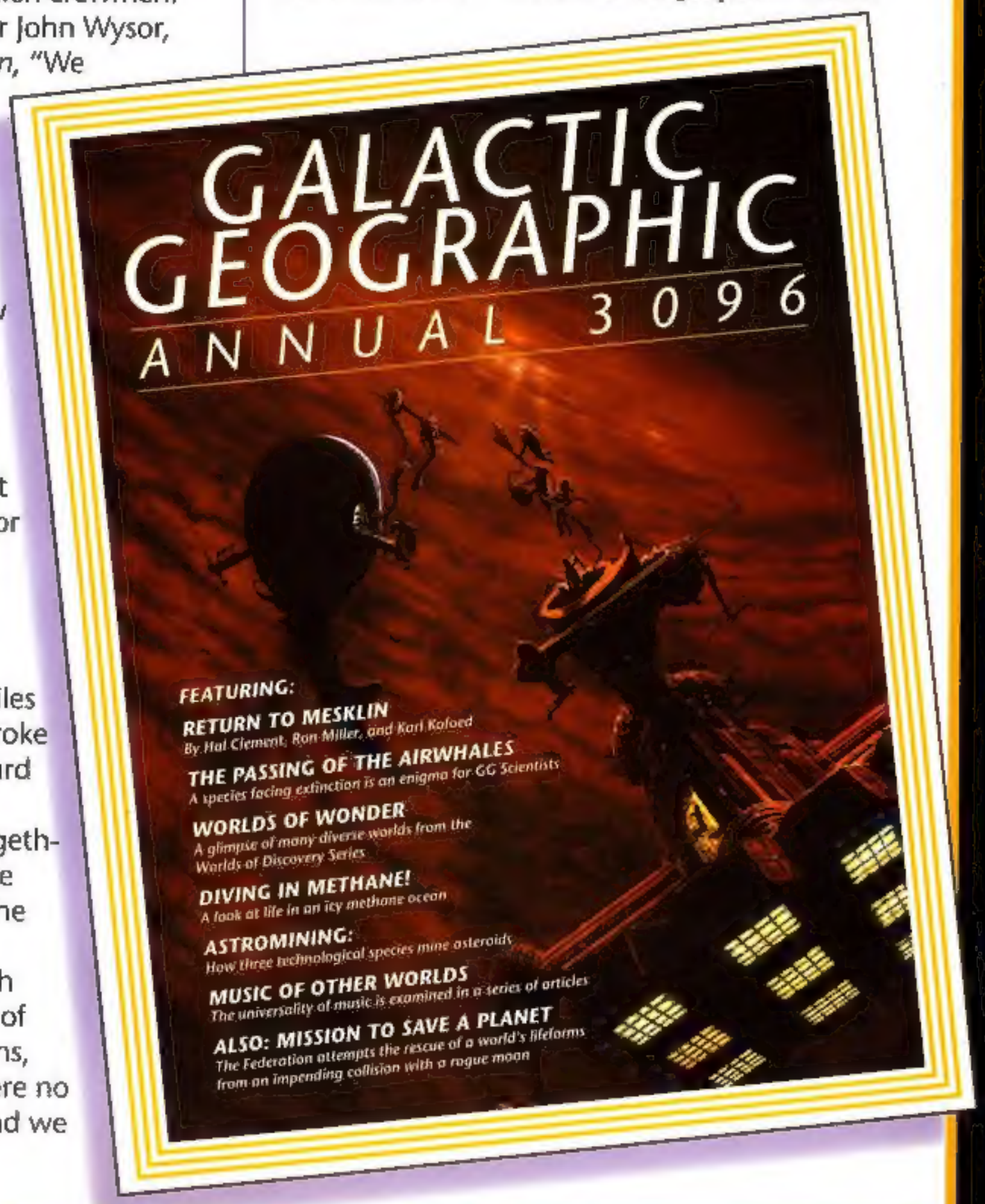
"We sent out a hailing message on the SL wave and the photonics. We even tried radio, but they didn't see us. It took a burn of our G-pulsers for them to notice us."

Wysor recalls a cat and mouse game that lasted for days.

"We were thousands of miles apart most of the time. We broke the ice by slowly moving toward them. Eventually our mutual curiosity brought our ships together. We decided an EVA was the best way to meet. We knew the risks, but it was worth it. The strange thing was that we both brought our instruments. Any of them could have been weapons, but somehow we knew we were no threat to each other. In the end we knew little more then when it started. But one thing was clear to all of us. There IS intelligent life out there."

Today the Federation of Worlds includes more than ten sentient space faring races among its members. Strangely, none of them are the mystery race that met the *Magellan* a hundred years ago and became mankind's long awaited "first contact."

Karl Kofoed *Galactic Geographic • Earth*


GALACTIC GEOGRAPHIC
ANNUAL 3096
FEATURING:
RETURN TO MESKLIN
By Hal Clement, Ron Miller, and Karl Kofoed
THE PASSING OF THE AIRWHALES
A species facing extinction is an enigma for GG Scientists
WORLDS OF WONDER
A glimpse of many diverse worlds from the Worlds of Discovery Series
DIVING IN METHANE!
A look at life in an icy methane ocean
ASTROMINING:
How three technological species mine asteroids
MUSIC OF OTHER WORLDS
The universality of music is examined in a series of articles
ALSO: MISSION TO SAVE A PLANET
The Federation attempts the rescue of a world's lifeforms from an impending collision with a rogue moon

GALACTIC GEOGRAPHIC © 2001

Kurt Kofoed

www.members.home.net/ggeographic

A BIT OF THEORY...

BEFORE THE EXPERIMENTAL STAGE, WHICH YOU ARE ALL SO EAGER TO BEGIN...

WHAT'S LOVEMAKING? WELL, UNLIKE WASHING THE DISHES OR CLEANING THE HOUSE, LOVEMAKING IS NO CHORE.

OKAY, I'LL TAKE THE EVEN DAYS AND YOU TAKE THE ODD ONES.

WHAT ABOUT LEAP YEARS?

WHO MAKES LOVE?

IN MOST CASES, WOMEN.

MEN WOULD RATHER SCREW.

DOES SEX HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH LOVE? NO. YOU CAN HAVE SEX WITHOUT BEING IN LOVE.

YOU GOT BEAUTIFUL EYES.

IF THAT'S ALL YOU'RE INTERESTED IN, SAY IT!

HOWEVER, IT'S MOST UNPLEASANT TO BE IN LOVE AND NOT HAVE SEX

IS SEX EXPENSIVE?

YOU CAN HAVE GREAT RELATIONS WITH YOURSELF, AND IT WON'T COST YOU A PENNY, WHICH PROVES THAT SEX IS ACCESSIBLE EVEN TO THE POOREST

IS LACK OF SEX A SERIOUS PROBLEM?

DOCTOR, I'M UGLY, I'VE GOT BAD BREATH AND A TINY DICK, SO I DON'T OFTEN GET THE CHANCE TO MAKE LOVE.

WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE?

DON'T WORRY, EVERY PROBLEM HAS A SOLUTION.

WHY HAVE SEX?

FIVE GOOD REASONS THAT WILL CONVINCE EVEN THE MOST HESITANT.

TO KEEP YOUR BODY IN SHAPE

SCREWING FOR TEN MINUTES BURNS UP MORE CALORIES THAN JOGGING FOR AN HOUR SO WHY DEPRIVE YOURSELF.

TO KEEP YOUR SPIRITS HIGH.

POLISHING YOUR TOOL WILL RELEASE MORE POSITIVE VIBES THAN A GAME OF POOL.

TO KEEP CLEAN.

YEEEESS

LOVEMAKING WILL MAKE YOUR SWEAT GLANDS WORK, ELIMINATING TOXINS AND INCITING YOU TO SHOWER

TO KEEP HEALTHY

DON'T DISTURB

SEX CAN CURE MANY MINOR ILLS THAT CHEMICALS CANNOT TREAT. ALTHOUGH THIS FORM OF TREATMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN MEDICALLY RECOGNIZED, IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED.

FOR PLEASURE.

WHY DON'T WE DO SOMETHING NICE FOR OUR BODIES, SPIRITS, HYGIENE AND HEALTH?

PPCHHHH

ALL AT ONCE?

YOU'RE SURE IT'S NOT TOO MUCH?

AND THAT'S A GOOD ENOUGH REASON TO ENJOY IT!

TREND

BY MEREDITH BOGARD

REAL LIFE TELEVISION

Yes, it's trite. Yes, it's unimaginable. And above all... it plain outright humiliating! Your every move, every thought and every word taped for viewing pleasure. Beyond voyeurism. Since it began, I'm wondering how and when it will end.

MTV's 'The Real World' was an experiment in young persons programming choosing 7 strangers to live together while having their lives taped. There were no scripts, no roles, and no rehearsing. It was a video diary of your life with others, cut and edited for commercial use. The result became a fixed special of situations put to music that manipulated the people into stereotyped characters.

The angry black man
The young naive outsider
The flamboyant gay-male
The hunk
The musician... the list goes on.

Since the sensation of the first season taped in New York City, spins have and continued to brew. As we approach the 10th Real World production, MTV has spun off the sister show, Road Rules, taking 5 strangers on the road for life-threatening experiences.

Forget skydiving or bungee jumping... these kids have become rodeo clowns, shark tamers, and visited a southwestern corn museum! Talk about your wild nights.

Following formulas, MTV has made it work for them. The after effects of each life have been explored throughout the entertainment industry. Many have gone on to hosting programs such as The Grind and The View. Others maintain lower profiles by starting up dot coms, charity organizations and still finding themselves.

On the off-season, most have chosen to explore their inner selves by opting to join the Real World/Road Rules Challenge. Basically, this guarantees a viewer to keep up with their favorite "character" and his/her antics. (This runs during sweeps week, right?)

It is safe to say that MTV has started a montage of other developments in reality television.

We now can watch various humiliations on Temptation Island, The Mole, Castaway (the film), and even the poorly rated Big Brother. But Survivor holds the record of developing nobodies into icons.

Before guessing how many were originally chosen for the program (which is irrelevant), I think it's important to mention the demographics involved. The ages range from 18-70+ years old! And the last 3 survivors happened to be the 70+ veteran, a young unemployed girl with enormous willpower, and a gay alleged child abuser who had lost over 100 lbs. before taping began.

With survivors like these, who cares about living?

Prizes ranged in monetary value depending on your length of time spent on the deserted island. The winner of course gets $1 million.

The catch?

Obstacle courses and mind-games for weeks on end! It may be as simple as a relay race or dynamic like the self-taped Q&A obstacle course.

But would you eat a live larva worm just to help your fellow teammates for whom you will later stab in the back?

I don't think so.

For Survivor: The Outback, I've already been privileged enough to watch 16 strangers get dropped off in the jungle, walk 5 miles with their 50 pound supplies in sweltering heat, and start rumors about 1 member hiding beef jerky. Don't these people have more important things to do?

Now Temptation Island is one to stir things up. Four couples have volunteered to test their relationships by the singles scene on a desert resort by going on dates, hot tubbing, and body shots. One couple recently removed began their pleasure stay in turmoil. Their controversy? They have a child together!

I'm glad FOX TV had enough sense to remove these morons before splitting up a family on national television. The remorse however on love's binding faith has been left in the cold for the others. If they need to test their relationship, they need to call it quits.

And what is The Mole? No, it's not the beauty mark on Cindy Crawford's face.

The Mole is yet another reality based TV show testing trust, value and betrayal amongst even more strangers. And I do mean STRANGERS. It's hard enough to watch this crap let alone learn about the characters background and what drove them to the highest level of stupidity.

The Mole refers to the "undercover spy" who is supposed to lead the team members into traps, hence hindering their monetary winnings per game. Their objective is to try and figure out who is The Mole without being terminated from the show.

Jmmm ok.

Who comes up with this shit, anyway??

Next, we have POP Stars! Yay... or should I say No!

Since being up on all these boy bands, the producers of The WB have come up with an "oh-so-cute" idea. Hold open auditions for females throughout the United States to ultimately choose the 5 best singers/dancers/performers. Thus forming POP Stars! The first "making of" an all girl band that of course, won't amount to shit.

The heartbreak, humiliation, and all around disappointment of tears are completely documented with each person they decided to focus upon.

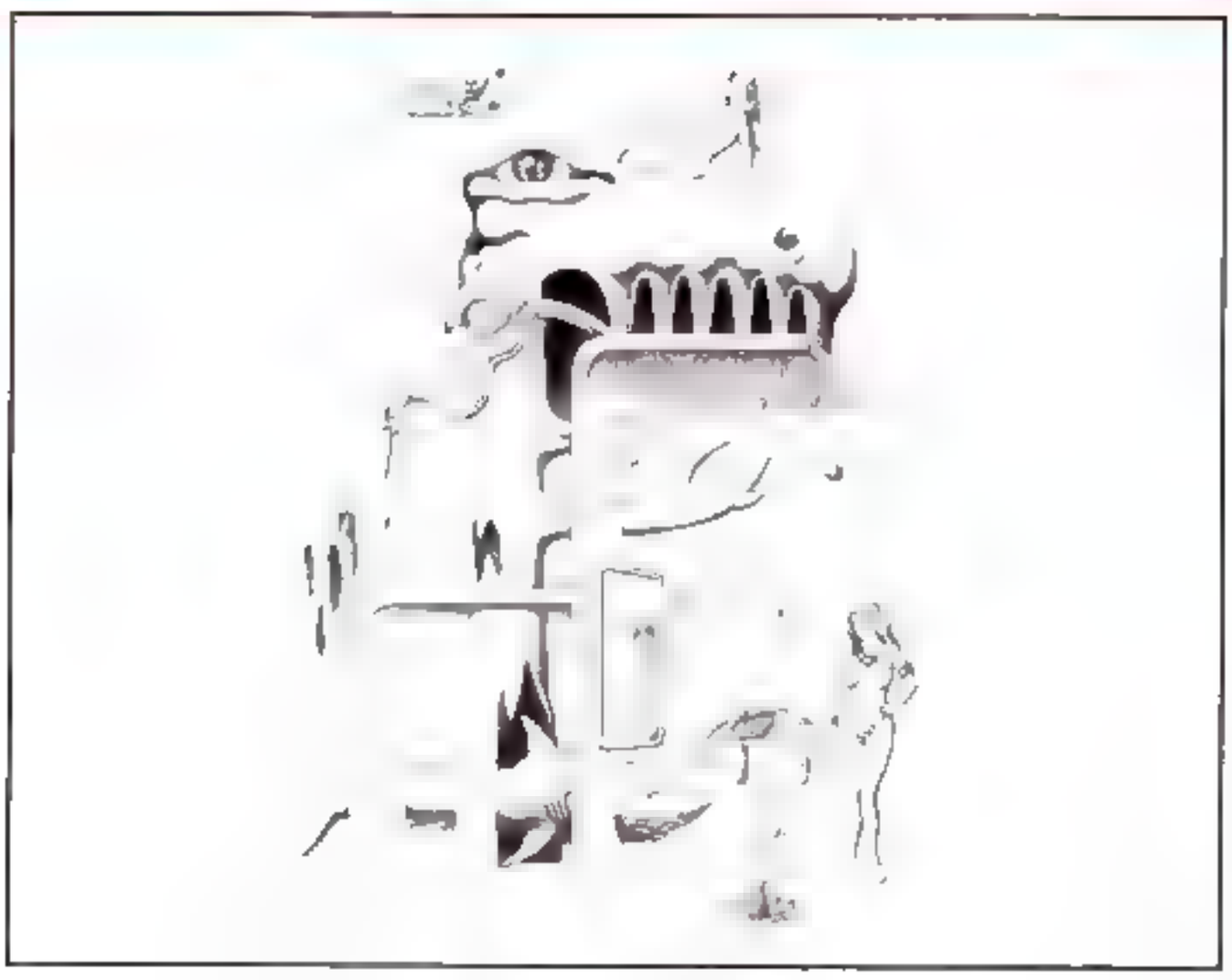
Reality TV? Yeah sure. Like the overweight mess of a woman who was picked to attend the finals from the original count will make it to the last 5? I don't think so. She may very well have the best voice, and hey – maybe she can even dance. But the truth is, she's fat, unattractive and unkempt. Why get her hopes up by moving her to the finals?

To cover their ass against biased producers of course.

The whole premise is so over the top that I've decided to stop watching even though the research benefits this article. I'd rather eat the live worm from Survivor.

Blind Date, Change of Heart, Fanatic... the list goes on.

This turning point in the 21st Century Broadcasting System is wearing thin. I'm looking forward to a reality-based program of reality TV haters. Cause I think could definitely make some money off the network then.



© ALLAN BAKER

NO, THIS ISN'T MARIE-NOËLLE. IT'S AÏCHA CAILLERA. MARIE-NOËLLE IS IN A MEETING.

YOU GONNA GIVE ME YOUR PIN NUMBER?

FORGET IT! SHE'S GOT A WAD OF BILLS IN HER HERMES BAG

BORIS, MY DEAR, GO DOWN TO THE PARKING LOT. OUR CLIENT IS BEING MUGGED BY AÏCHA'S GANG.

I'LL GO BEAT THEIR BRAINS OUT!

I'M SO SORRY, MARIE-NOËLLE

HELP ME!

WHERE DID THE BITCHES GO?

I'M REALLY SORRY THERE'S A GANG OF TEENAGE BITCHES THAT'S BEEN CREATING HAVOC IN THE PARKING LOT

WHAT'S THE POLICE DOING?

WHEN I GOT OUT OF THE CAR, I ASKED THEM IF THIS WAS THE STARDUST, AND THEN THEY HIT ME AND STOLE MY HERMES BAG AND CELL PHONE.

HERE, DRINK THIS. IT'LL PERK YOU UP

BORIS IS STILL IN THE PARKING LOT. HE'S SURE TO FIND THEM.

THAT ASSHOLE IS ALWAYS IN THE PARKING LOT.

DON'T HANG ABOUT.

LET'S FIND ANOTHER EXIT

IT STINKS IN HERE!

I'M AFRAID OF RATS.

YUCK! THIS IS GROSS!

WHAT AN EXTRAORDINARY DRINK! IS THIS YOUR FAMOUS COCKTAIL? I FEEL GREAT! YOU MUST MARKET THIS DRINK!

SO FAR, WE'RE JUST PRODUCING IT IN SMALL QUANTITIES. WE LACK THE CAPITAL TO LAUNCH IT ON THE MARKET. PERHAPS YOUR COMPANY COULD HELP US?

THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR! WE'RE VERY INTERESTED. WE BELIEVE THE FUTURE LIES IN THE DISCO-BIO CAN YOU'VE DESIGNED FOR SOFT DRINKS ACTUALLY, I'D BE CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT GOES INTO YOUR DRINK.

THAT'S OUR SECRET! BUT COME DOWN TO THE BASEMENT, AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW WE MAKE IT

WHERE ARE WE?

IN THE BASEMENT.

HUSH, I HEAR VOICES.

OOH! WHAT ARE THESE THINGS?

AMMANITAMER, A MAGIC MUSHROOM THAT I BROUGHT OVER FROM MOROCCO.

MIXED WITH ALMOND AND COCONUT JUICE, JUST A MILLIGRAM IS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU EUPHORIC. WOMEN ARE ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE TO THIS FUNGUS, BUT WE CONTROL THE DOSAGE CAREFULLY, OTHERWISE YOU COULD GO FROM EUPHORIC WELL-BEING TO BURNING AGITATION, THEN TO CRAZED FURY, FOLLOWED BY WILD FRENZY, MURDEROUS RAGE, THEN TOTAL APATHY, ENDING IN MAD ANIMAL DESIRE.

SHIT!

JEEZ!

WOW!

MY POODLE ATE A TINY PIECE AND WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A WILD BEAST. IT HAD TO BE PUT DOWN.

I'VE GOT TO TRY SOME OF THAT!

JUST GIVE THOSE ROTTING WOODEN PLANKS A GOOD YANK!

I'M GOING TO CALL MY LAWYERS RIGHT AWAY SO WE CAN DRAW UP A CONTRACT

WAOOUH

WATCH IT! BORIS CAN'T BE FAR.

THERE'S A DOG FIGHT AT THE LOCAL PARKING LOT TONIGHT!

MY LITTLE POOCH!

KAMii

WE'RE GOING TO TURN YOUR DOGGY 'NTO A FIGHTER!

ARE YOU CRAZY, A'CHA? YOU WANT TO BET A THOUSAND DOLLARS ON THAT POODLE? THE PIT BULLS WILL EAT HIM ALIVE!

YOU GONNA TAKE MY CASH OR NOT, RACHID?

YOU THINK IT'S GONNA WORK?

I DON'T KNOW. HE'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE SINCE HE ATE THE MUSHROOM.

GO ON, KILL 'IM!

STOP! I'M GONNA DIE LAUGHIN'!

GRRRR

KAH...

GRR GRR

CROC!

GOT 'EM

WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' TONIGHT, DEAR?

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND THE ODDS WERE TEN TO ONE. YOU OWE ME TEN GRAND, RACHID!

THEY'VE WASTED HIM WITH THEIR SHITTY LITTLE POODLE.

BORIS!

SOMETHING AIN'T RIGHT!

MMM, I LOVE THIS COCKTAIL

I FOUND THE CAILLERAS AND THE LADY'S PURSE

KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF OUR DOUGH!

THEY MUST BE TAUGHT A LESSON

OKAY, GIRLS, IF YOU AGREE TO DRINK A CONCENTRATED DOSE OF AMMANICTAMER AND TO PUT ON A LITTLE SHOW FOR US, WE'LL LET YOU GO WITH YOUR MONEY

IT'S DANGEROUS. I'LL HAVE TO PUT UP PROTECTION BARRIERS. THE PLACE IS STARTING TO FILL UP.

THIS EVENING, MY FRIENDS, THE STAR DUST OFFERS YOU A SUPER-SEXY SHOW. YOU'RE GOING TO WITNESS A FIGHT BETWEEN MAD FURIES. THEY'RE GOING TO TEAR THEMSELVES APART BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES.

I'M CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN

ME TOO!

WE WORK FOR MS. MARIE-NOËLLE

PLEASE COME IN!

MEET MY FINANCIAL ADVISERS. WE'LL BE ABLE TO TALK BUSINESS NOW.

THE SHOW'S ABOUT TO BEG N!

I DON'T NEED A CONTRACT TO COPY YOUR DISCO-BIO CAN ..

GRRR

TO THE DEATH!

GIVE US BLOOD!

KILL 'ER!

POKE HER EYE OUT!

I WANT THE RECIPE FOR YOUR AMMANICTAMER COCKTAIL. HURRY UP AND GIVE IT TO ME, ANGELA, BEFORE MY ADVISERS SHOOT OFF YOUR BROTHER'S BALLS.

BORIS, SOMETHING WEIRD'S GOING ON.

HEY!

CALM DOWN!

GO ON, GET IN THERE!

GRRR

GRRFFFT!

I'LL COUNT TO THREE.

DON'T SHOOT I'LL GIVE YOU THE RECIPE.

ANGELA, THEY WON'T DARE SHOOT!

YOU WANNA PUT MONEY ON THAT, PANSY?

LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO OUR HOSTESSES THEY SPECIALIZE IN RELAXING MASSAGES.

THAT'S THE STAGE KNOWN AS "MURDEROUS RAGE". JUST GIVE THEM SOME TIME.

THAT'S "TOTAL APATHY".

JUST THROW THEM IN THE DUMPSTER. WHAT'S NEXT?

"MAD ANIMAL DESIRE"...

FUCK YOU, BORIS.

FUCK ME, BORIS.

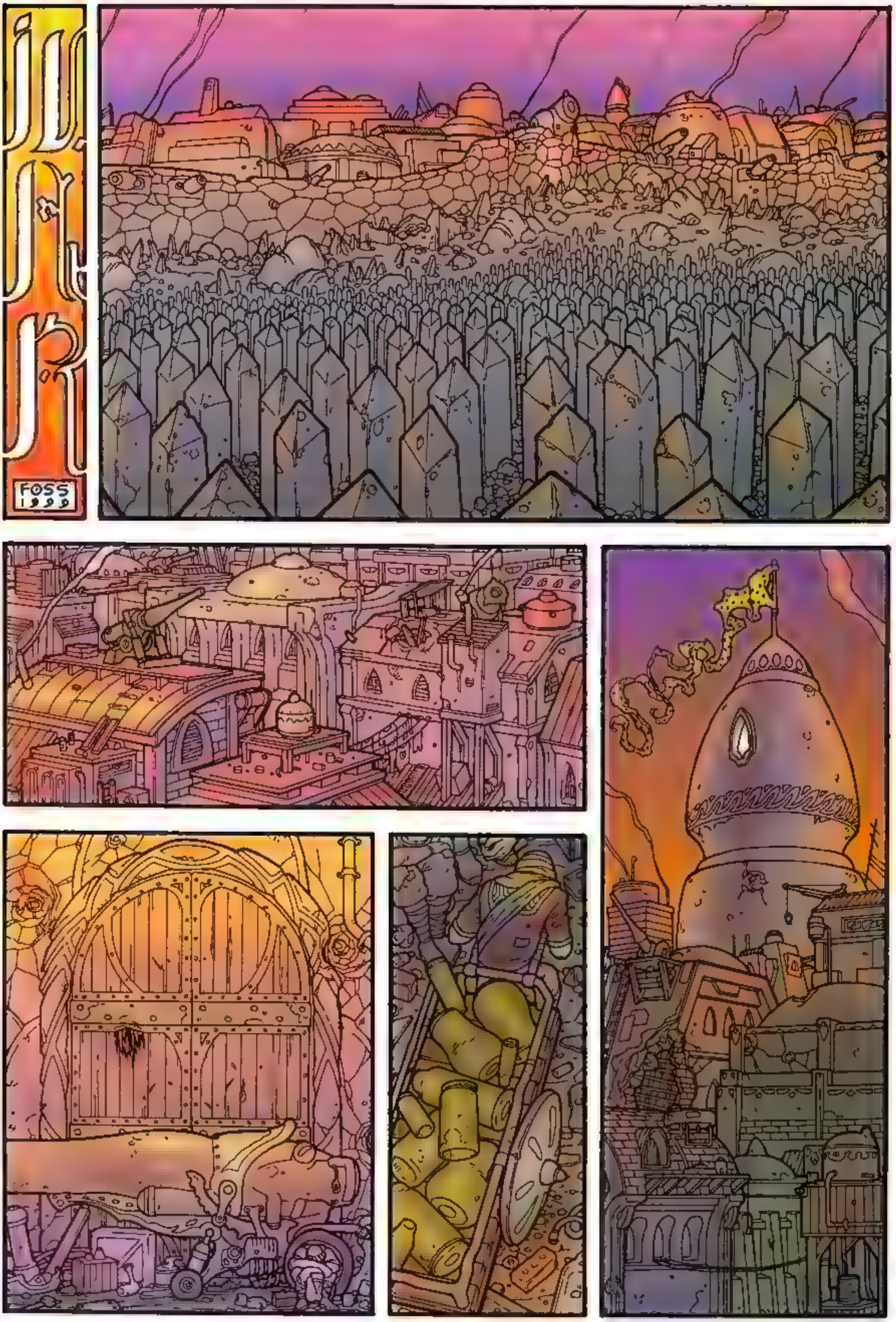
FUCK MEEE, BORIS.

FUCK MEE, BORIS.

WHAT A NIGHTMARE!

MEE MEE

STARDUST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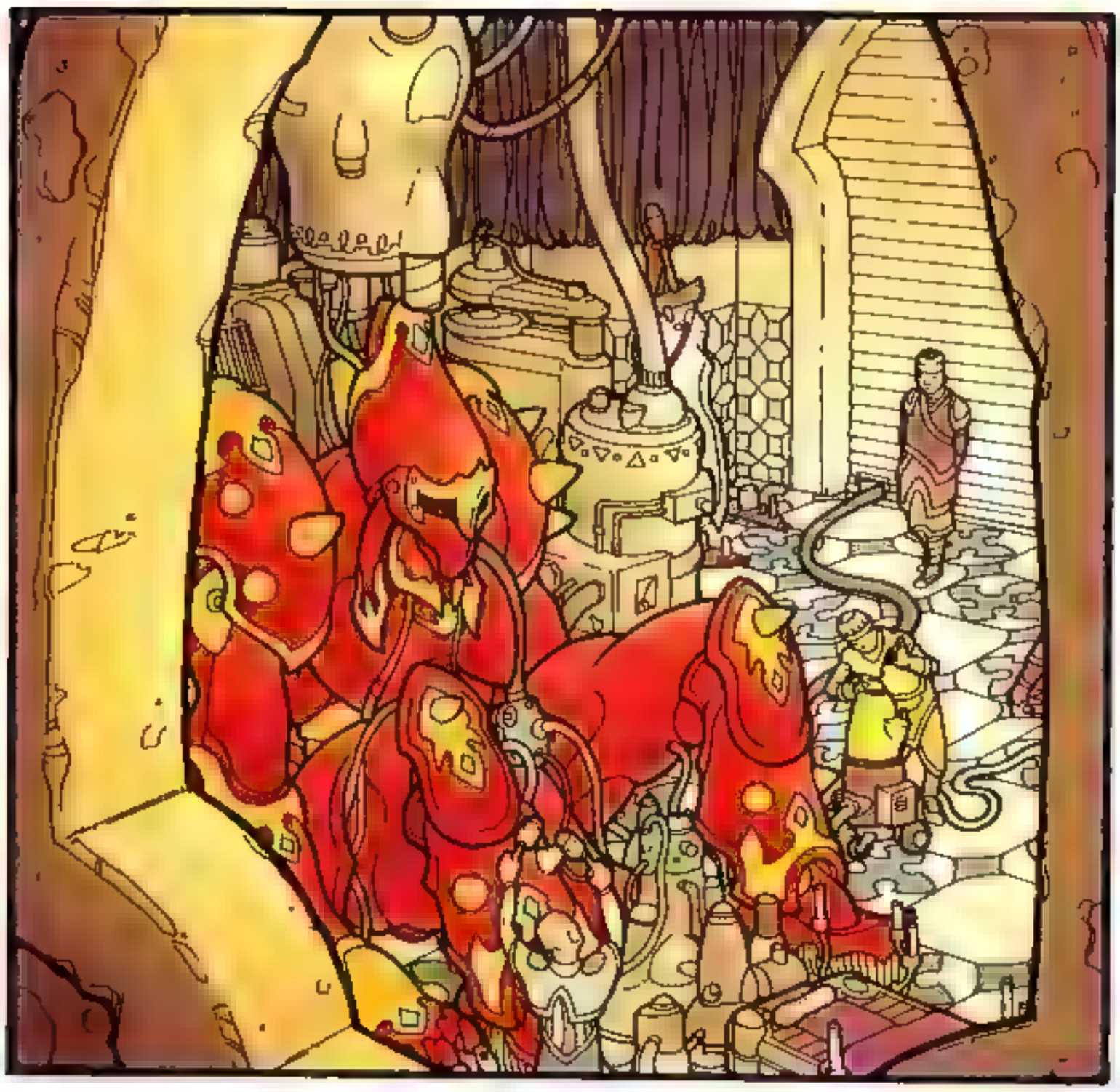

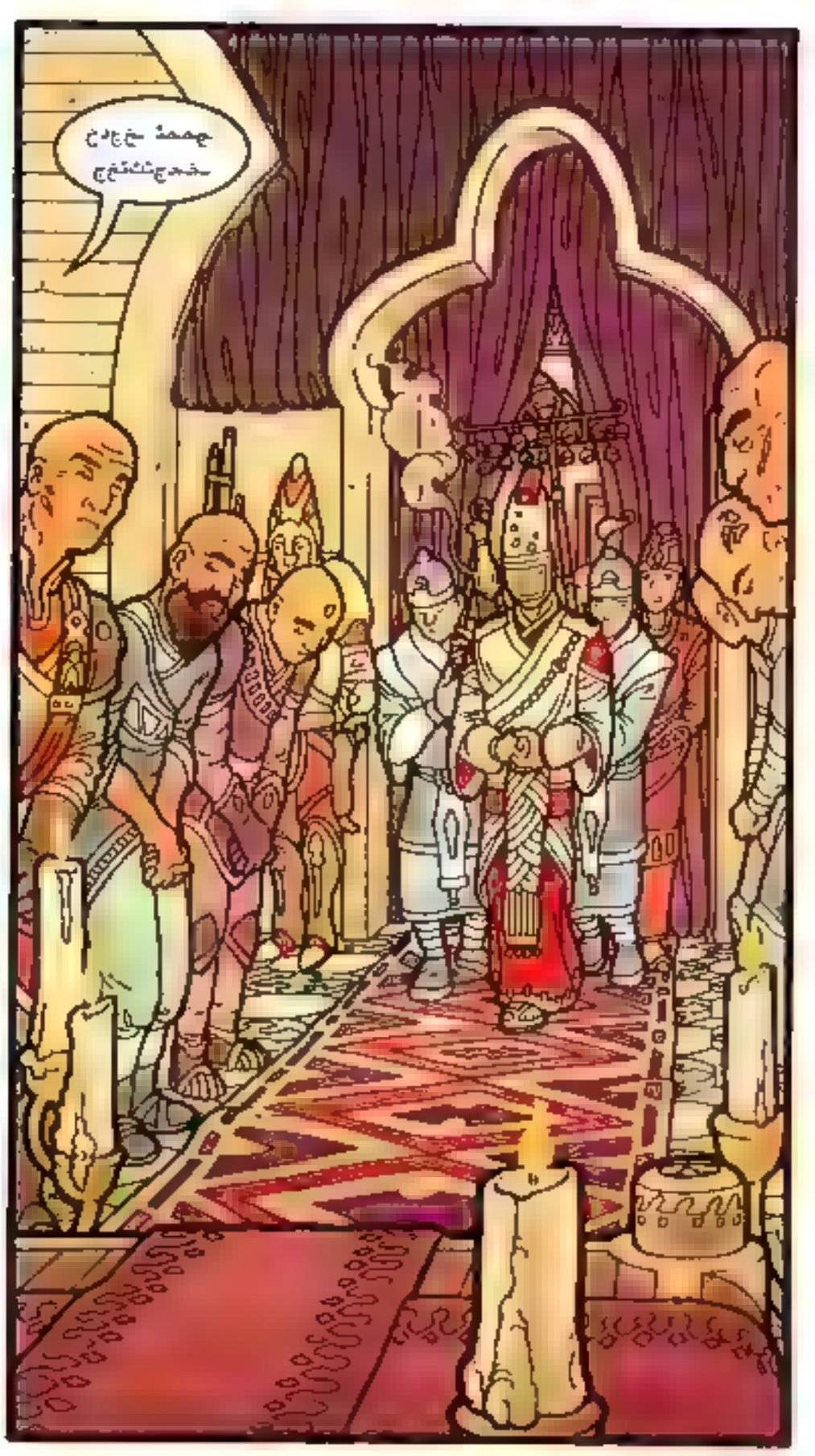

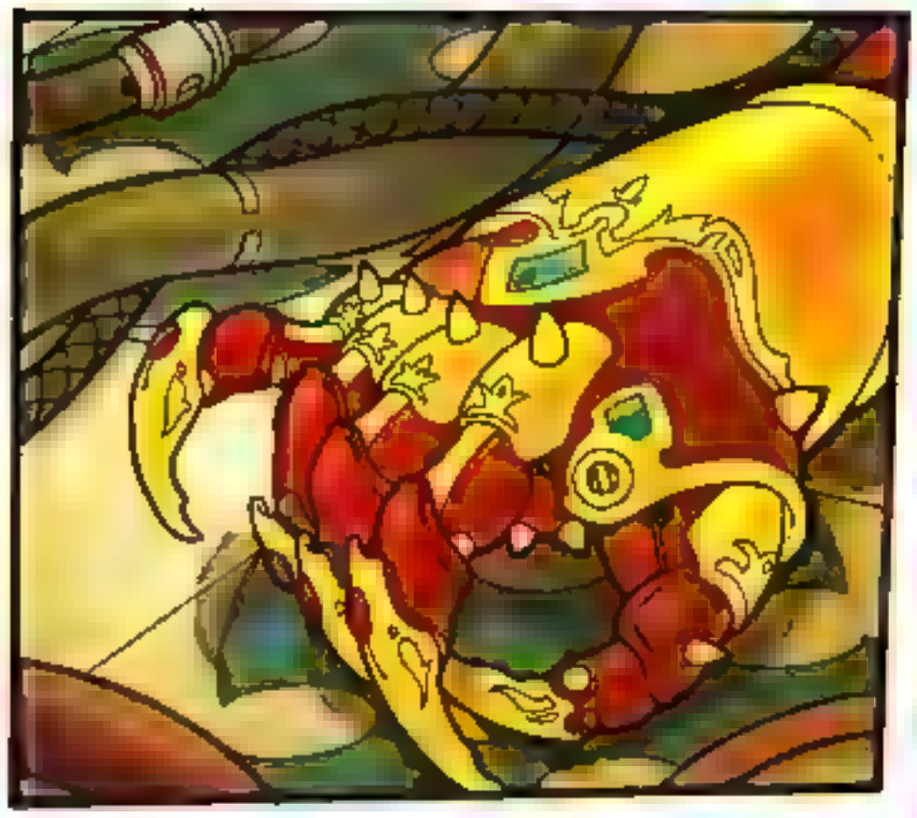

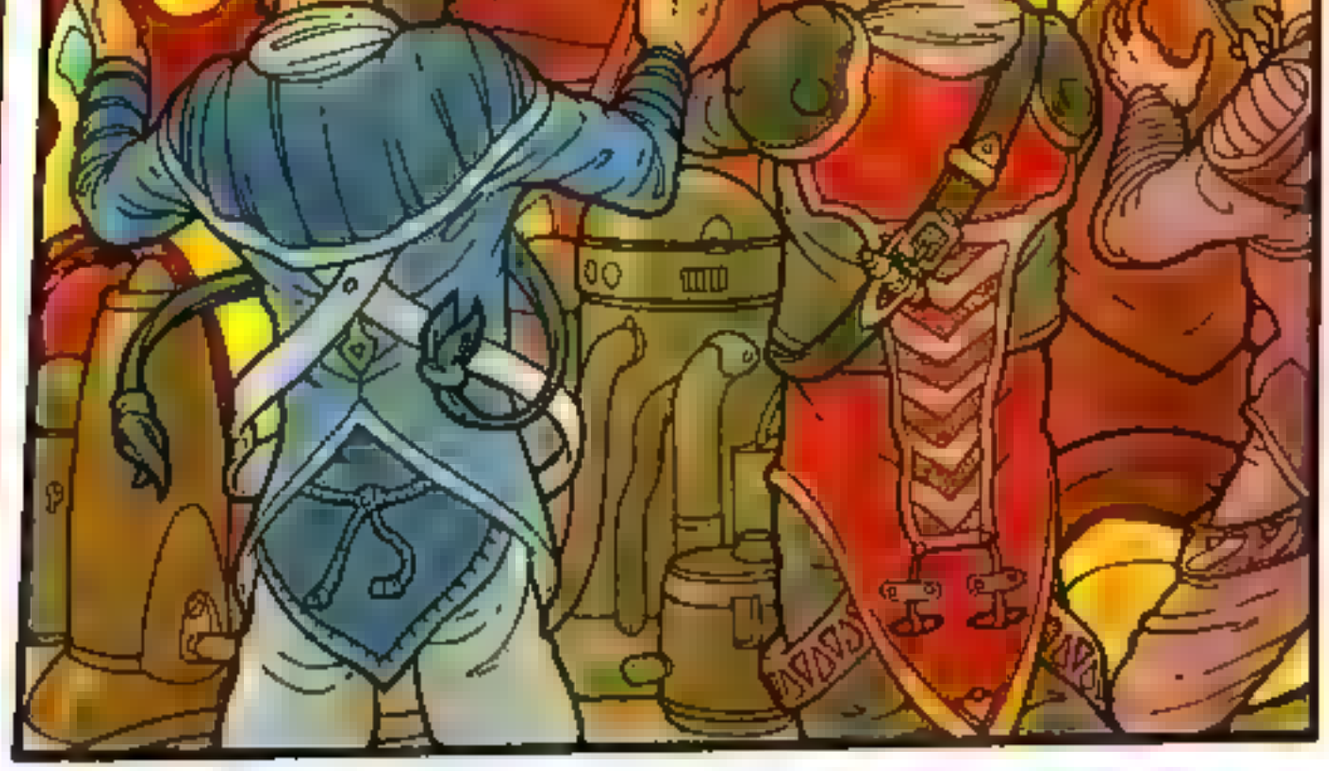

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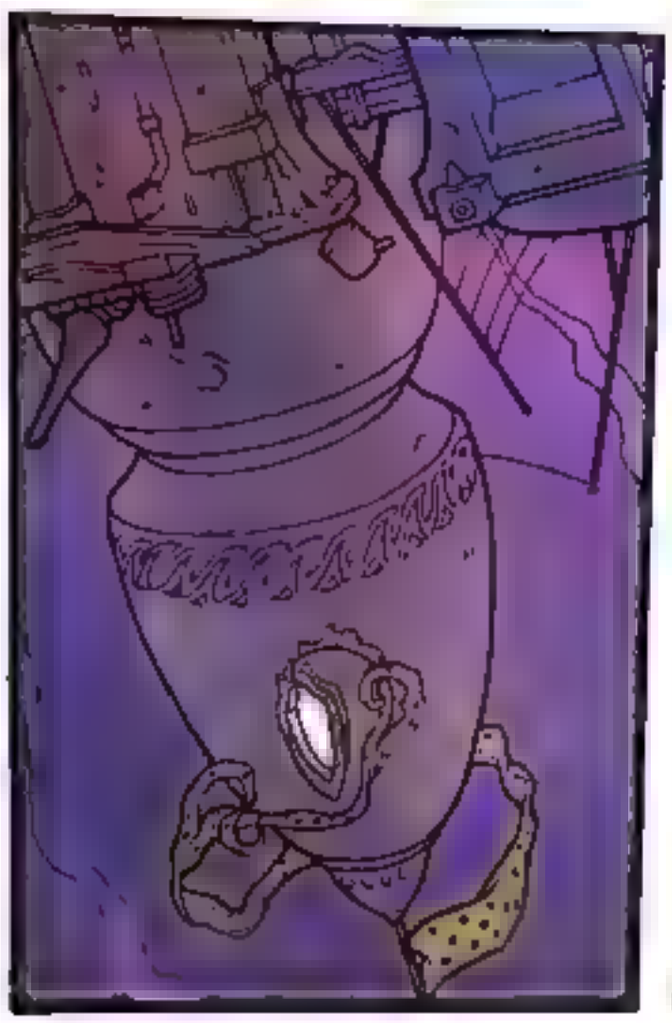
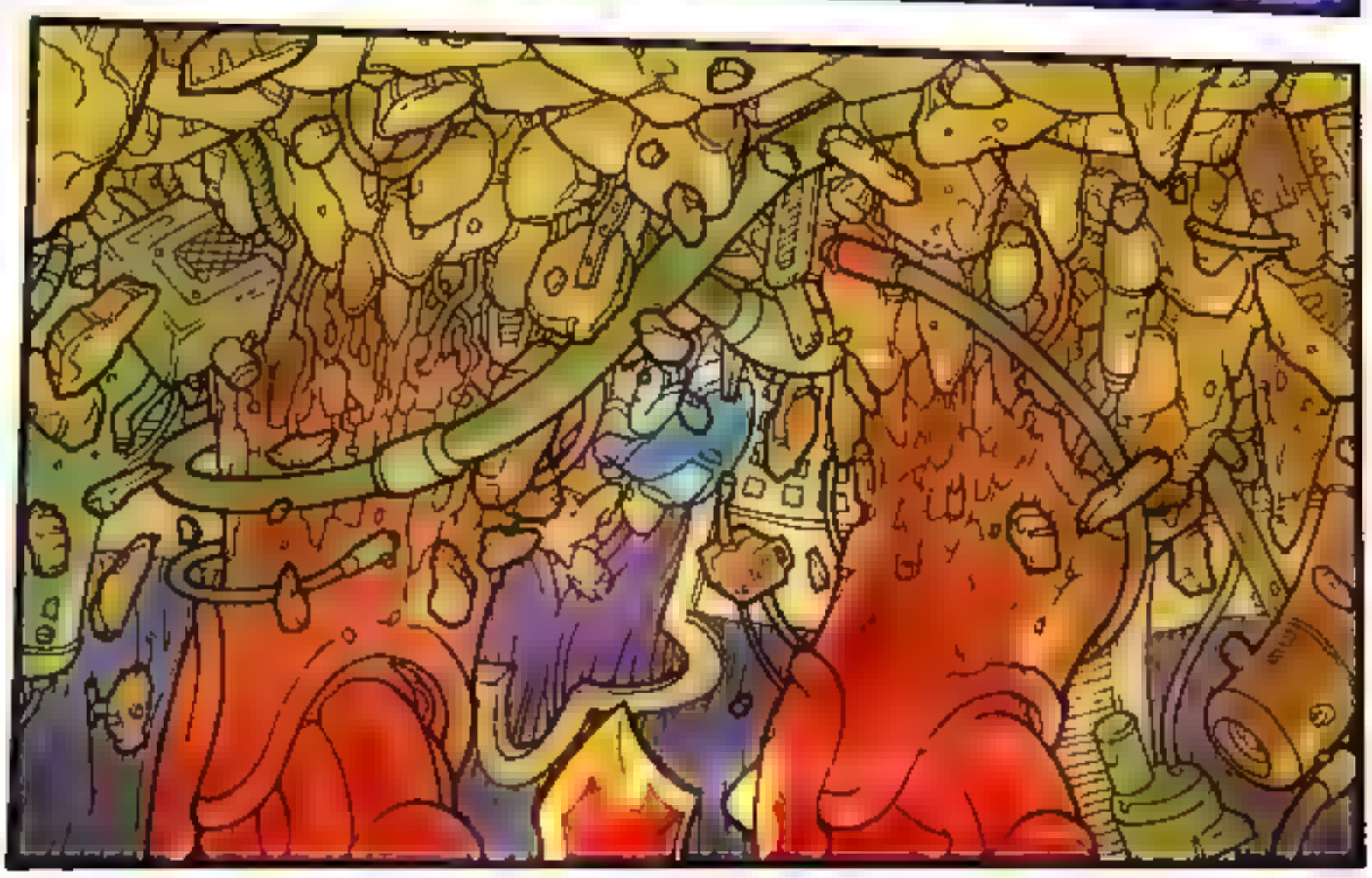



THE FORGOTTEN PLANET

AHH...

DO I... EXIST?... I FEEL LIKE A... BLOCK OF ICE...

...AS IF A COLD WIND WERE HOWLING DEEP IN MY THROAT... IN MY LUNGS... AS IF SOMETHING WERE MELTING INSIDE... BLURRED MEMORIES, FAMILIAR, PAINFUL FEELINGS...

MH... OH... YES...

I'M AFRAID...

ANXIETY... WHY DO I FEEL SO ANXIOUS?... THE DARKNESS OF NIGHT...

I'M SO COLD ..

I'M BLIND.

OH, MY GOD... WHY CAN'T I SEE ANYTHING? NO... COULD THAT BE A LIGHT?

A SOUND... I CAN'T PLACE IT, BUT IT'S OUT THERE.. I CAN FEEL A SLIGHT PRESSURE ON ME. .

SOMETHING IS TOUCHING ME... SOMEONE... BUT WHO COULD IT BE?

I SEE!..

WHAT... WHAT IS IT?

NO, NO... MONSTERS, NIGHTMARES... I'M SO TIRED... I DON'T WANT TO .

YES... YES, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO FORGET, TO FALL INTO A DEEP DREAMLESS SLEEP... TO RETURN TO THE ICE BLOCK WHERE MEMORY IS NO MORE... MEMORY, WHAT MEMORIES?... A TERRIBLE FEELING OF EMPTINESS DESCENDS ON ME... I'M AFRAID!

BUT . WHO AM I? I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. WHAT HAPPENED? . WHERE AM I?

PERHAPS THE MIND DOESN'T WAKE UP AS QUICKLY AS THE BODY...

I CAN'T MOVE .. OH! MY ARMS... NOW I CAN MOVE THEM!

I FEEL SLUGGISH... BUT I CAN FEEL THE BLOOD COURSING THROUGH MY VEINS... AH, THE ICE IS GRADUALLY BEGINNING TO MELT!

I MUST REACT! REACT! I CAN FEEL MY LEGS NOW ..

I'D BETTER MOVE... GET UP AND CHASE THIS FROZEN DREAM AWAY... THIS DREAM WHICH IS TOO CLOSE TO DEATH!

AH.. MMHH ..

OH GOD... I'M ACHING ALL OVER HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN ASLEEP?

GOD! MY BRAIN FEELS FOGGY!... HOW COME I REALLY CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING?

WHERE AM I? WHAT AM I DOING SLEEPING IN THIS ABSURD PLACE? .. I SEEM TO BE SURROUNDED BY WRECKS... WRECKS OF MACHINES... OF THINGS THAT RESEMBLE MACHINES. HMM.

IS ANYONE THERE?

WHAT SHOULD I DO?... I'D BETTER KEEP A LOW PROFILE IT COULD BE DANGEROUS AROUND HERE BUT WHAT SORT OF DANGER, I WONDER?

HUH!... THERE WAS SOMEONE HERE! I SAW HIM WHEN I WOKE UP HIS FACE WAS COVERED WITH A WEIRD CONTRAPTION AND HE WAS STARING AT ME OUT OF ONE HORRIBLE EYE AND THEN HE TOUCHED ME, MY BREASTS, MY HIPS. ALL OVER AND MAYBE.

.. WHAT IF IT WAS A DREAM?... IT'S ALL VERY HAZY.

I REALLY HAVE TO MOVE AROUND... I'LL BEGIN BY STANDING UP. MHHH... THAT FEELS BETTER... IT WILL BE GOOD FOR ME TO WALK A BIT...

THERE ARE OTHER SMALL COTS LIKE MINE, BUT THEY ARE ALL EMPTY

EXCEPT FOR THIS ONE... THERE'S SOMEONE LYING IN IT... UNLESS...

MY GOD!

WHO COULD THAT BE? HE'S DEAD AND MUMMIFIED! AND WHO KNOWS HOW LONG FOR!..

THE SAME THING COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ME! MAYBE I EVEN KNEW HIM!... BUT HE NEVER WOKE UP!

BRRR I HAVE TO GET OUT OF THIS SINISTER PLACE THAT WALL HAS BEEN PARTLY KNOCKED DOWN. MAYBE

OH NO! THE VOID!

I'LL TRY TO WALK ACROSS ON THIS BEAM... IT SEEMS STABLE... HMM... HMM... IT MUST LEAD SOMEWHERE .. I HOPE... I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM OR WHY I'M HERE. I DON'T EVEN KNOW MY OWN NAME! I DON'T SEEM TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ANYTHING!

THE WIND IS REALLY BLOWING I HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL IF I DON'T WATCH MY STEP, I'M GOING TO FALL WHAT A FRIGHTENING DROP! I CAN'T SEE THE BOTTOM I'D BETTER NOT LOOK.

THERE . MADE IT!

5

FROM THIS DISTANCE I CAN SEE THE STRANGE MACHINE BETTER IT'S AMAZING .. BUT WHAT CAN IT BE?... I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED... JUST A LINGERING FEAR...

MY GOD! WHAT INCREDIBLE SILENCE! I WASN'T FULLY CONSCIOUS OF IT BEFORE TOTAL SILENCE, EXCEPT FOR THE WIND COULD IT BE A LIFELESS WORLD? A WORLD WITH NO MEMORIES? I FEEL I'M PART OF IT AS IF I'D BEEN EMPTIED FROM THE INSIDE AS IF I DIDN'T EXIST AND HAD NEVER EVEN BEEN BORN.

I HAVE TO FIND OUT WHERE I AM... MAYBE THAT WILL HELP ME REMEMBER WHO I AM... YES, I MUST EXPLORE..

THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE IT WAS BUILT BY INTELLIGENT BEINGS... SOMEHOW...

SOMETHING TELLS ME I SHOULD GO UP THESE STAIRS...

I HAVE A STRANGE FEELING OF DÉJÀ-VU, AND THAT TERRIFIES ME!... AS IF ALL MY NIGHTMARES AND FEARS HAD SUDDENLY RISEN TO THE SURFACE

I'M SURE THESE SINISTER FEELINGS ARE TOTALLY UNFOUNDED BUT THIS PLACE IS SO CREEPY THAT IT'S BEGINNING TO AFFECT MY BEHAVIOR THE ATMOSPHERE IS OPPRESSIVE

I'VE BEEN SO WRAPPED UP IN MY OWN THOUGHTS THAT I HADN'T EVEN NOTICED THAT LIGHT FROM OUTSIDE AMAZING IT'S A CITY, A CITY!

GOD, IT'S SO HIGH! IT SEEMS TO GO ON FOREVER

THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND ME!... I HEARD A SOUND... PROBABLY FOOTSTEPS!

I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING, BUT I CAN HEAR SOMEONE COMING THIS WAY... I'D BETTER HIDE AND FIND OUT WHO IT IS..

THIS DARK CORNER WILL HAVE TO DO...

THE FOOTSTEPS SEEM FASTER... AND THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER... HAS SOMEONE SEEN ME?

OH!...

OH MY GOD! LOOK AT THAT. OH NO!

WHO ARE YOU? STOP! DON'T GET ANY CLOSER! NO
TOUMP
AH!...

THUMP

UH... H'... HOW ARE YOU? THANKS FOR STEPPING 'N BUT... HEY! WHY ARE YOU POINTING THAT THING AT ME?

IS THERE A PROBLEM? I HOPE IT'S NOT ME. WE COULD BE FRIENDS. WHAT DO YOU SAY?... PUT YOUR GUN AWAY!

HUH?

THIS GUY SPEAKS A STRANGE LANGUAGE... I BET HE WANTS TO KNOW WHO I AM AND WHAT I'M DOING HERE!... BUT THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT MYSELF!

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

IS HE TRYING TO RIP OFF MY CLOTHES OR WHAT?

HEY! TAKE IT EASY! HAVE YOU NEVER SEEN A WOMAN? OKAY, GENTLY NOW OUCH! MY HAIR!

HEY WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THEY'RE REALLY INTERESTED IN MY BACK! MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT IT WHO KNOWS? BRRR WHAT ROUGH, COLD HANDS!

THAT'S ENOUGH NOW! YOU'VE HAD A GOOD LOOK HEY, I'M TALKING TO YOU! LET GO OF MY HAIR!

NO NO! DON'T TIE ME UP! THERE'S REALLY NO NEED TO! WAIT! HEY! BE GENTLE!..

SNIKT!

ALL RIGHT, BUT DON'T SHOVE ME AROUND! WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME? . WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU? IT'S POINTLESS TRYING MYSELF OUT TALKING TO YOU. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!

I'M THE ONE WHO MUST TRY TO UNDERSTAND, OF COURSE! HOW DID I END UP IN THIS MADHOUSE? I STILL DON'T KNOW WHO I AM I WOKE UP IN THAT STRANGE MACHINE AND THEN

THE CITY SEEMED DESERTED, BUT ACTUALLY FIRST THE MONSTER AND NOW THESE MEN MEN? WITH THOSE EYES? CAN THEY REALLY BE HUMAN?

IT SHOULDN'T BE SO DIFFICULT FOR ME TO RECOGNIZE HUMANS! I'M A WOMAN, AND I AM HERE... BUT AM I REALLY OF THIS WORLD? OR, IF NOT, WHERE AM I FROM?...

YES I THINK I CAN VAGUELY REMEMBER NOW INFINITE SPACE BITS AND PIECES OF MY PAST JUST FRAGMENTS

AAH!

MY GOD! I SAW A MAN A TERRIBLE, PAINFUL MEMORY! I MUST'VE SCREAMED

YES, YES... IT'S ALL RIGHT, GUYS! KEEP CALM. JUST A FALSE ALARM NO NEED TO WORRY PLEASE PUT THOSE THINGS DOWN!

THESE GUYS SEEM PRETTY NERVOUS! WHAT CAN THEY BE AFRAID OF? PROBABLY OF THE MONSTERS HMM. AND NOW WHAT HAPPENS? THAT'S QUITE A DROP!

A VISION OF THAT MAN APPEARED SUDDENLY IN MY MIND! SO VIVID YET SO DISTANT THE FOG IN MY BRAIN MAKES ME FEEL STRANGE HEY WHAT'S THAT BIZARRE THING THAT'S HEADING THIS WAY?

BMP BMP TIC

!!
TUTUMTUMP
BOOM BOOM
TUMP
OH MY GOD, NO!
TUMP!
BOOM
TA TA-TA-TA
TUM
THEY LOOK LIKE ROBOTS SO THAT MONSTER I JUST SAW WAS IT A MACHINE? THIS MUST BE HELL
THEY'RE ALL FIRING LIKE MAD. AT THIS RATE, I'M GOING TO GET HIT! HOW STUPID TO DIE LIKE THAT WITHOUT A PAST WHAT A STRANGE END! THAT ONE WAS HIT IN THE FACE OH, HE'S STILL MOVING!
WHAT HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE DID HE WALK OUT OF? .. MY GOD, WHAT IS IT?...
5

HOW HOR-RIBLE!

FRRSSSSH!!!

TUM TUM P BO

OKAY, I'M MOVING NOT SO FAST! IT'S A LONG DROP?!

HEY, LOOK AT THAT GUY... HE GRABBED THAT CREATURE... WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE INSIDE THE BELLY OF A MONSTER OR MAYBE OF A MACHINE

COULD THIS BE A MEANS OF TRANSPORT?

...?...

MY GOD, THE TH NGS N THOSE TUBES UGH. THEY FRIGHTEN ME!.. WHAT DO THEY HAVE TO DO WITH THE MEN WITH WHITE EYES?

WE'RE GOING FARTHER AND FARTHER INTO THIS HUGE CITY

BUT WHERE ARE WE GOING? WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO TO ME? WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME? I'M AFRAID I MUST THINK . I MUST TRY TO REMEMBER... I CAN FEEL THAT I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!

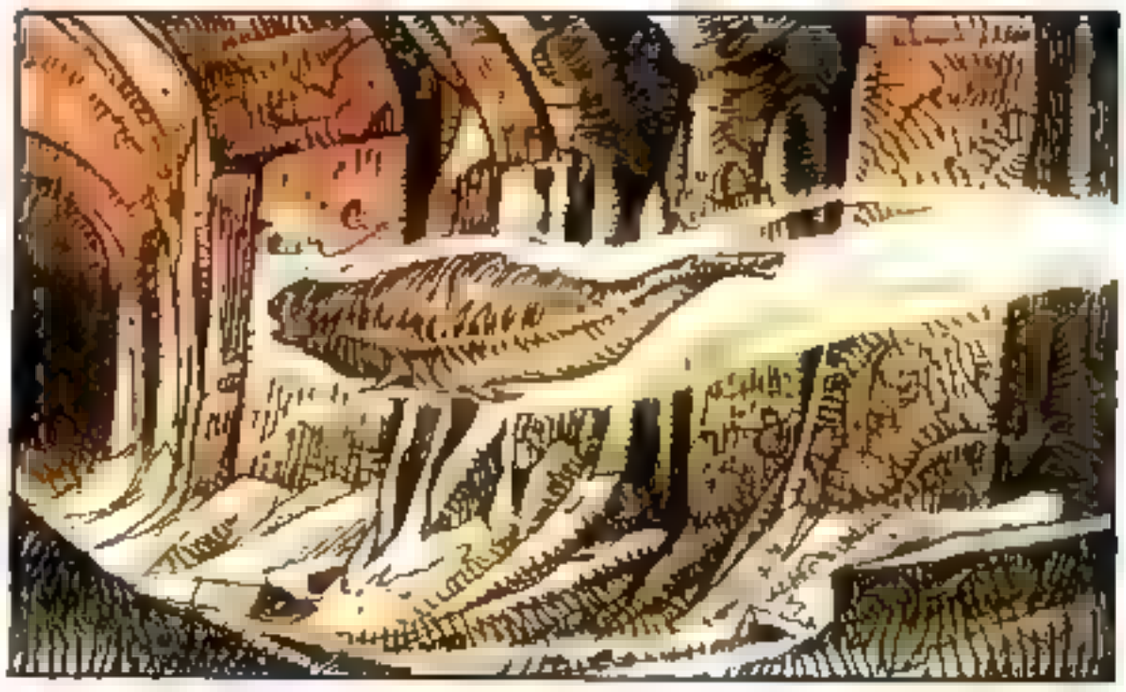
..?!..

BUT WHO ARE THEY?! WHO CAN THEY BE?

THAT DISGUSTING THING WITH ONE EYE!... I KNOW IT'S STARING AT ME. I FEEL SICK... IT MUST BE THE STIFLING HEAT... THE AWFUL STENCH..

AAKHH... I'M IN PAIN... THERE'S A TERRIBLE HUMMING INSIDE MY HEAD. I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING. SOMETHING IS OPPRESSING ME... GOD, NO... I CAN'T BREATHE!

I'M GOING TO FAINT AHHH.



AHHH!

AHHH!... NOW I REALLY FEEL SICK TO MY STOMACH. BUT MY HEAD'S STOPPED HURTING I GUESS I FAINTED. THE COLD FLOOR AGAINST MY BODY FEELS GOOD. IT'S DARK. MY EYELIDS ARE HEAVY. I CAN'T OPEN MY EYES.
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN?

I'M EXHAUSTED! BUT IT'S A GOOD FEELING... LANGUOROUS .. THE SORT OF EXHAUSTION THAT FOLLOWS LOVEMAKING .. AN INTENSE PLEASURE .. SEX? BUT IT COULDN'T BE! WHEN AND HOW COULD I HAVE HAD SEX?
20

WH... WHERE AM I NOW? I WAS IN THAT STRANGE VEHICLE THEN I LOST CONSCIOUSNESS. AND NOW I'M IN THIS ROOM, AND I'M COMPLETELY NAKED .. WHY DID THEY UNDRESS ME? WHAT IS THIS? A PRISON?

HEY! THAT THING IS MOVING IT SEEMS TO BE FOLLOWING ME AROUND. IT'S AN ELECTRONIC EYE, OF COURSE! A CAMERA. WHICH MEANS THAT I'M BEING WATCHED!

THERE ARE CAMERAS EVERYWHERE... THIS IS THE SORT OF THING THAT MAKES ME FEEL UNEASY .

DAMN! I WISH I COULD COVER MYSELF... BUT MY CLOTHES HAVE DISAPPEARED THEY WERE JUST TWO SMALL BITS OF CLOTH, BUT THEY WERE ALL I HAD! THE ROOM IS COMPLETELY EMPTY... I CAN'T EVEN SEE THE DOOR, BUT I GOT IN HERE SOMEHOW!

21

OH... SO IT WAS A SCREEN... AN IMAGE IS APPEARING ON IT! MAYBE THEY'RE TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH ME

WHAT! IT'S ME! THEY FILMED ME BUT WHEN?!

THOSE ARE A MAN'S HANDS! THEY ARE TOUCHING ME, FEELING ME

WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN? BEFORE I CAME TO... BUT I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTH NG. THEY MUST'VE DRUGGED ME YES. THAT HAS TO BE IT THE AWFUL PENETRATING STENCH THAT MADE ME SICK HMM. IT TURNED MY INSTINCTS LOOSE. THAT FACELESS MAN. WHAT S HE DOING TO ME?

AH, THERE ARE TWO OF THEM. BUT WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO ME? IT'S TERRIBLE TO FEEL SO AROUSED! DAMN! I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTH NG ABOUT MY PAST, BUT I KNOW I'VE ALWAYS L KED THIS! IT'S CRAZY!

WHAT IS GOING ON?

I LOVE TH S FEELING!

AND YET... EVEN RIGHT NOW.. I'M LOOKING... LOOKING AT MYSELF WHILE THAT MAN IS ABOUT TO POSSESS ME. OH GOD! I CAN FEEL THE WARMTH RISING IN MY GROIN... AND AN OVERPOWERING DESIRE..

AH, IT'S MARVELOUS TO BE TAKEN LIKE THAT... IT'S ALWAYS DRIVEN ME MAD!...

NOTHING IN THE WORLD FEELS SO GOOD!

I FEEL LIKE A BITCH IN HEAT... TOUCHING MYSELF AND KNOWING THAT I'M BEING WATCHED! BUT IS THIS REALLY ME, OR AM I STILL UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE DRUGS?

AHHH...

OH, WHO CARES! I DON'T WANT TO KNOW! IT FEELS TOO GOOD... BUT WHAT HAS HE GOT ON HIS BACK?!

WHAT COULD IT BE? WHAT'S THIS HORRIBLE THING THROBBING ON HIS BACK?

OH, NO! AND I... I LET SUCH A... DISGUSTING MONSTER... NEAR ME!...

NO, NO WHAT AN ABSURD NIGHTMARE! WHAT HAPPENED TO ME? WHAT WAS I THINKING OF?... I LET MYSELF BE INFLUENCED! I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT THAT THING ANYMORE... GODDAMN MONSTERS! WHAT DO THEY WANT FROM ME?

I MUST THINK... AND FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE... OH, THE LIGHTS HAVE GONE OUT... I'M IN TOTAL DARKNESS.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THE PRISON WALLS HAVE DISAPPEARED! BUT HOW?

I CAN SEE SOME-TH NG OH MY GOD! THEY'RE ALL AROUND ME!

OH, NO, GUYS! .. SORRY, BUT WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM... I CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU. I DON'T SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE.

MHHR... NOW WE SPEAK IN PRIMITIVE HUMAN TONGUE .. YOU ANSWER.. YES?... YOU ARE PARADOX, YOU NOT EXIST. YOU COME FROM OUTSIDE CITY? YOU FEMALE... ORGANIC SPECIES.. YOU LIVE OUTSIDE?

AHEM. I'M NOT AN ANIMAL. I AM A HUMAN BEING, OF THE FEMALE GENDER. I POSSESS ALL THE FEMALE ATTRIBUTES, IN THEIR RIGHT PLACES! OUTSIDE? I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM FROM, DAMN IT. I CAN'T REMEMBER. BUT I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT. JUST AS I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE!

YES. YOU HUMAN. LIVING DANGEROUS SPECIES THAT DISAPPEARED AFTER THE COMING OF THE "GREAT MOTHER". YOU DARK FOG IN HEAD. SO YOU PART OF PROJECT ORGANIZED BY MACHINES?

YOUR THOUGHTS AND YOUR BODY ARE VERY DEAR TO US...

WHA...? HE'S SPEAKING PERFECTLY NOW!

NO, NO... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. AND I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANY MACHINE-ENGINEERED PROJECT. BUT I'VE LOST MY MEMORY. AND I'M TRYING TO FIND IT, YOU UNDERSTAND? YOU... YOU ARE UPSETTING ME. WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

WE MUST REGENERATE LIFE, WE NEED TO RENEW THE HOST BIOLOGICAL APPARATUS. PERHAPS YOU ARE PART OF THE PROPHECY?

WHAT PROPHECY? I DON'T KNOW. . OH, MY GOD!. . YOU .. THAT MASK... I SAW YOU ON THE SCREEN... YOU WERE THE ONE THAT I...

THE HOST THAT STANDS IN FRONT OF YOU IS HUMAN JUST LIKE YOU. A LIVING, BIOLOGICAL CREATURE. IF IMPERFECT WE TRIED COUPLING ONCE, BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG

THIS GUY'S WEIRD HE TALKS ABOUT HIMSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON. HE SAYS THINGS THAT OH. HE'S GONE. DARKNESS HAS DESCENDED AGAIN

COME! THERE'S NO POINT RESISTING IT'S TIME TO UNITE WITH THE "GREAT MOTHER" YOU MUST FOLLOW THE HOST

UNITE THE "GREAT MOTHER" I'M WORRIED I MUST FIND A WAY OF ESCAPING!

OKAY, I'M COMING!

HEY, CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MEN WHO WERE SURROUNDING ME? HOW DID THEY SUDDENLY DISAPPEAR?

NOT MEN... WE BELONG TO THE ADVENTIST CASTE. WE ARE THE SONS OF THE FIRST ERA. WE ARE NOT HERE. WE ARE VERY FAR AWAY. WHAT STANDS BEFORE YOU IS A HOLOGRAM.

HOLOGRAM? UNBELIEVABLE! YOUR TECHNOLOGY IS HIGHLY ADVANCED BUT, TELL ME, HOW COME YOU SPEAK SO WELL?

. . ?

WE USE TECHNOLOGY BUT WE'D RATHER NOT IT BELONGS TO THE MACHINES BEFORE IT USED TO BELONG TO HUMANS. RIGHT NOW YOU ARE COMMUNICATING WITH US, BUT IT'S THE HOST THAT STANDS BEFORE YOU THAT IS EXPRESSING HIMSELF.

THIS NATURAL CAPACITY FOR EXPRESSION EXISTS IN HIS MIND. LIKE YOU, HE IS AN EXTRAORDINARY SPECIMEN. BOTH HIS REPRODUCTIVE APPARATUS AND HIS BRAIN ARE BEING CAREFULLY STUDIED.

AND THOSE THINGS OVER THERE ARE ELECTRONIC EYES. SO WE ARE BEING WATCHED!

LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. . YOU FRIGHTEN ME .. WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?

YOU'LL UNDERSTAND AFTER YOU'VE BEEN CONVERTED AND UNITED WITH THE GREAT MOTHER. YOU'LL BE FREE OF WORRIES.

CONVERTED?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

BUT... WHAT... OH, GOD!

IT WAS HERE IN THIS CORNER THAT I SAW THEM... SPIDER-SHAPED MONSTERS WRIGGLING ABOUT IN THOSE STRANGE COCOONS... WHAT IS THAT? OH GOD, HORRORS! I'VE... I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE, FAR AWAY FROM THAT CREATURE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM NOW? WHY IS HE LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT? OH, IT'S A HUMAN EYE AND IT'S BLEEDING.

AHRG. . AH .. GO AWAY .. GO... FAR FROM HERE. DRU... DRUUNA

WHAT'S HE MUTTERING? DRUUNA? OH!

OH MY GOD! HE'S CALLING ME .. MY NAME IS DRUUNA. I'M DRUUNA!

HURRY... AHRG! THE MACHINES. DRUUNA... GET AWAY BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! OHHH!

ANSWER ME.. WHO ARE YOU? WHO ARE YOU?

I AHRG . OH THE MASK!

OH GOD! YES, I RECOGNIZE YOU! YOU'RE WILL, COMMANDER WILL!

IT'S ALL OVER FOR ME! THEY CONVERTED ME BUT I'M ALIVE THEY HAVEN'T SUCCEEDED IN TAKING OVER MY MIND COMPLETELY

THERE'S A MONSTROUS, EVIL CREATURE. INSIDE ME.. IT'S DEVOURING MY BRAIN THEY'LL DO THE SAME THING TO YOU, ORUJNA... GO! LOOK FOR THE MACHINES .. OOHHH. .

WHAT MACHINES? I DON'T GET IT!

WILL... WILL...

OOHH. AHRG... GO AWAY ARGH

WOMAN, DON'T MOVE... YOU'LL BE APPROACHED SHORTLY .. THE HOST IS MALFUNCTIONING MOMENTARILY ..

YOUR PRIMITIVE HUMAN INSTINCT WILL MAKE YOU WANT TO RUN AWAY BUT THAT'S PURELY IRRATIONAL THE UNAVOIDABLE MEETING WITH THE GREAT MOTHER IS NEAR. IT WILL BE A MOMENT OF SUBLIME GRACE FOR YOU ...

GO FUCK YOURSELF!

AHRG OOOHHH

ESCAPE... BUT WHERE TO... I'LL TRY TO GET AS FAR AWAY AS POSSIBLE!

DAMN! THERE ARE CAMERAS EVERYWHERE! WHAT CAN I DO?

I'VE BEEN RUNN NG FOR A LONG TIME NOW I'M EXHAUST-ED! .. TH'S PLACE OPPRESSES ME. I MUST HIDE.

DRAT I JUST HEARD A NOISE BEHIND ME... THEY'RE AFTER ME!.

HERE'S A SPOT... WITH NO CAMERAS. . IT'S JUST A HOLE, BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE!

I HOPE I'LL BE SAFE HERE. I MUST REST. . THEN I'LL TRY TO FIND A WAY OUT...

MMH... I CAN HARDLY SEE. I DON'T LIKE THAT THE DARKNESS MAKES ME FEEL ANXIOUS. THERE'S SOMETHING THREATENING IN THE AIR. I KNOW SOMEONE OR SOMETHING IS SILENTLY WATCHING ME

OH MY GOD! IT'S THEM! THE DAMN MONSTERS! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.

AH! THEY'VE SEEN ME. I'M FINISHED.

NOOO GO TO HELL!

I HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER EXIT! WHY ARE THOSE DISGUSTING CREATURES STARING AT ME?

AHHH OH THAT TERRIBLE WHISTLING SOUND IN MY HEAD! WHAT IS IT? GOD IT'S MORE LIKE HOWLING NOW! LIKE A PAINFUL LAMENT AHH IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY!

NOOOO WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME? THAT'S ENOUGH! YOU'RE HURTING ME NOOO THAT'S ENOUUUGH!

STOP IT! LEAVE ME ALONE!

YOU! LOOK!

AH. AHHHH!

OH! GOD! NO. OH NO. HOW AWFUL!

THE GREAT MOTHER SHE LOVES SHE LOVES US!

SHE LOVES YOU, TOO!

GO TO HER, DRUUNA. SHE LOVES YOU. WHEN YOU LIE IN HER ARMS, YOU WILL FEEL LOVE GO TO HER!

YES. YES, I AM DRUUNA.. YOU ARE THE MOTHER...

TAKE ME WITH YOU.. YES, YES.. HELP ME! HOLD ME. HOLD ME TIGHT .

BUT YOU. . YOU... YOU ARE NOT... YOU ARE NOT ..

NOOOOO... NOOOOO... NOOOOO...

OOHH .

WHERE AM I? WHAT HAPPENED? IT WAS ONLY A DREAM. A NIGHTMARE! BUT THAT HUGE MONSTER WAS REAL. THEY MUST'VE DRUGGED ME AGA'N.

SO WHAT DID I SEE? REALITY OR A HALLUC NA-TION? AND NOW THIS STRANGE PLACE. IT REMINDS ME OF MY PAST, SOMETHING I READ IN BOOKS IN BOOKS LIKE THOSE... HMM LET'S SEE..

BUT THERE'S NO WRITING!

THEY'RE ALL LIKE THAT THEY AREN'T REAL BOOKS. NOTHING MAKES ANY SENSE!

NOTHING LOOKS REAL. IT'S ALL FAKE .. LIKE A THEATER SET... A REASSURING ENVIRONMENT, CAREFULLY DESIGNED TO MAKE ME FEEL AT HOME. . BUT SOMETHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN. OH, I MUST CALM DOWN. MHH. BUT IT'S ALL SO PRETTY!...

SON OF A BITCH! NOW I GET IT! I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT FROM ME! I'M NOT THAT DUMB! YOU WANT TO USE MY BODY TO BREED MORE HUMANS, SO YOU'LL HAVE MORE HOSTS!

WHERE ARE YOU? I KNOW YOU'RE WATCHING ME... COME OUT OF YOUR HIDING PLACES, AND SHOW YOUR FACES!

THERE'S SOMEONE BEHIND ME! I CAN SEE HIS REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR!

OH, IT'S YOU!

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM? HE'S BEEN STARING AT ME WITHOUT MOVING FOR A LONG TIME... BUT IT'S CLEAR... IT'S ONLY A QUESTION OF TIME... I'M GOING TO HAVE SEX WITH HIM!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 102

HEAVY METAL PRESENTS

Once upon a time...

A long time ago...

...in the not completely unlikely future...

...in a town who's name changed so often even I completely lost track of what to call it...

...when life couldn't have sucked more...

the craziest thing happened...

A KEVIN EASTMAN

...Out of the blistering heat of the desert...

SIMON BISLEY PRODUCTION OF

...she came...

FISTFUL OF BLOOD

GLOVES

...And I knew things would never be the same again.

PLEASE TELL ME "THAT'S" REAL!!

UGH! UGH! UGH!

HEH!

YUM!

NOW THIS IS EXTRA SPECIAL--

--AND IT'S NOT EVEN MY BIRTHDAY!

YUM!

WELL, WELL, WELL-- BOTH HEADS AND TAILS LOOK GREAT!

YUM!

MAYBE WE SHOULD...

. TAKE HER..

INSIDE TO MAKE SURE SHE'S. . ALRIGHT.

HEH!

YUM!

HURRY-- I'M STARVING!

EASY, NOW EASY!

FIRST WE *PLAY*-- THEN WE EAT!

YUM!

HEY--

--SHE SMELLS A LITTLE DIFFERENT--

SHUT UP AN--

HEY!

BLAM

OW!

NOW HOLD ON, MISSY--

BLAM

!

NO!

STUPID BITCH!!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA "WHAT" YOU'RE DEALING WITH!

SPAK

COME ON-- HOLD STILL! IT WILL ONLY HURT FOR A MINUTE!

BLAM

MEH'

BLAM

BLAM

SHIT-- I THINK SHE FIGURED IT OUT

UT OH.

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

SPANG

SPAK

THOK

WHUP

FAWUMP

SPAK

HMMM

BAR

BARBER

HOTEL

Change always has to start somewhere...

...That day I just proved it wouldn't start in my place!

SHIT!!

SHE'S COMING THIS WAY!!

I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT! DAMN--I--

CLICK

HEY-- WHOA--GEEZ--NO-- NO PROBLEMS HERE YOUNG LADY --I'M COOL! LOOK, I'M REALLY FOND OF BREATHING, OKAY? FRIENDS?

WHEW-- NOW THEN-- NOT THAT I DON'T LOVE YOUR "STYLE" BUT DO YOU WANT SOME CLOTHES?

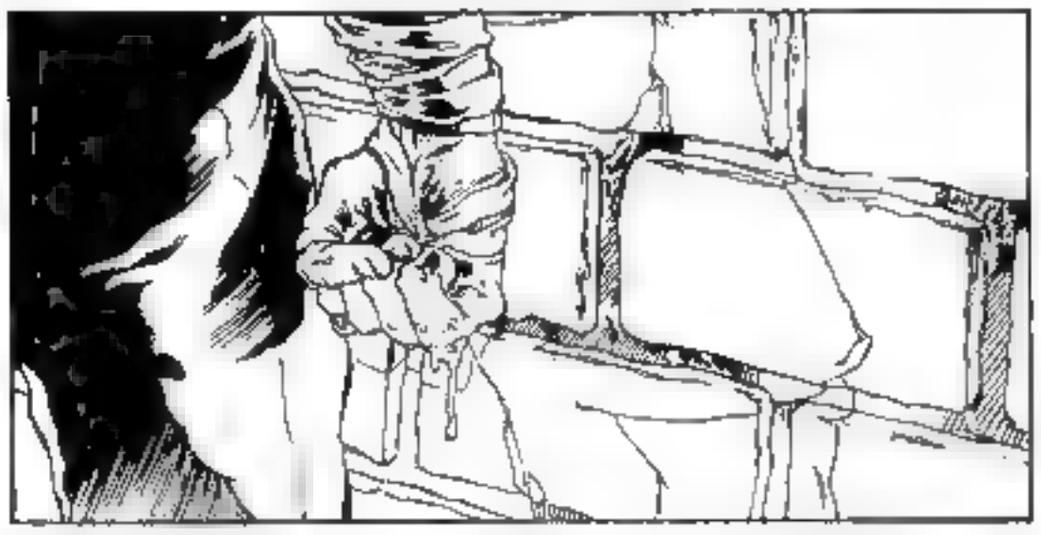
HMM?

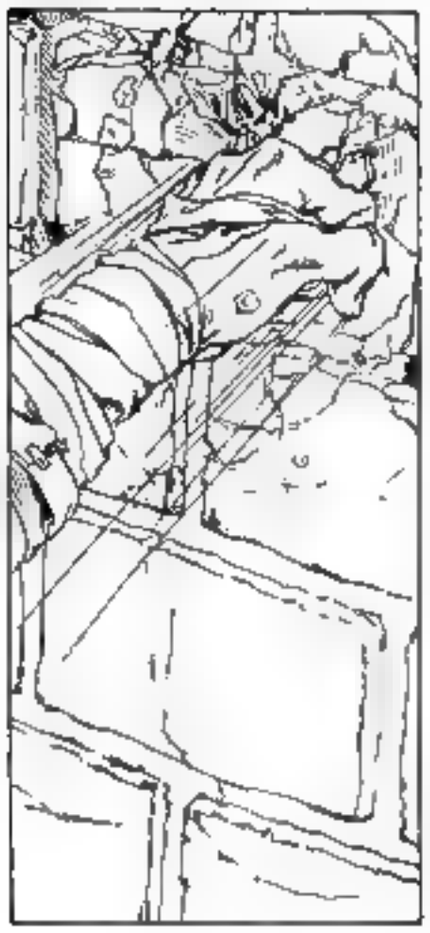
TO BE CONTINUED...

the Pugilist

CREATED WRITTEN & DRAWN BY
GREG-MICHAEL FOLLENDER

INKS BY RICK J. BRYANT





Star-Crossed

Domain transport RF-927J
Destination Classified

Passengers Sealed Agents of the Prime

Crew Very nervous

HURRY UP, GY-NAR. OUR VISITORS ARE ARRIVING.

WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK ...

They were nervous because they knew the stories about she who lived in the place that officially didn't exist

They were very nervous because the knew the stories about what happened to those who'd sappointed the Prime

transport docked. passengers disembarking.

OPEN SECURITY FROM PERIMETER TO INNER CHAMBER. LET THEM STRAIGHT THROUGH.

SEALED AGENTS 47# AND 359 NOW ENTERING INNER CHAMBER. NO WEAPONS DETECTED.

GREETINGS, ASTRA. WE ARE SORRY FOR DISTURBING YOU IN YOUR PRIVATE SANCTUM.

I'M NOT! WHAT A HONEY!

I BEAR AN ESPER-LINK DIRECTLY TO THE PRIME. HE HAS A PRIORITY COMMAND FOR YOU.

I WON'T DO ANYTHING, FOR YOU OR THE PRIME, UNTIL YOUR FRIEND STOPS BUGGING HIS EYES OUT AT ME.

OR SHOULD I REMOVE THEM FOR HIM ?

ER ... YES, MA'AM ... I MEAN, NO MA'AM ... SORRY

I JUST RECENTLY FINISHED A MISSION FOR THE PRIME! WHY MUST HE DISTURB ME AGAIN SO SOON ?!

I CAN NEVER TELL WHICH IS THE FRONT ON THESE THINGS.

THIS HAD BETTER BE GOOD. LET'S HEAR IT.

ESTABLISHING LINK NOW.

ASTRA ... <KRRKLE> ... ARE YOU RECEIVING ...

... URGENT NEED OF YOUR TALENTS ... ‹FSSZZTT› ... VELVET FIST HAS RESURFACED ... ‹KHTKHTKHT› ... BOOSTING POWER NOW!

AH. MUCH BETTER.

YOU'RE LOOKING FIT AS ALWAYS.

CAN THE FLATTERY AND GET TO THE POINT.

AND TELL YOUR ERRAND BOY HERE TO STOP STARING AT MY ASS.

DID I HEAR YOU MENTION THE VELVET FIST ?

YES. THE TERRORIST HAS STRUCK AGAIN. CLOSE TO CORESPACE, THIS TIME.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT ?

WE THOUGHT THE ATTACKS HAD STOPPED... (FSSZZTT)... AFTER WE PURGED SOKAGI-3.

LOT OF CIVILIANS DIED THERE, DIDN'T THEY ?

NOT CIVILIANS, MY DEAR. SYMPATHIZERS AIDING AN ENNEMY OF THE DOMAIN.

"WE WERE MORE FORTUNATE THIS TIME, HOWEVER. OUR FORCES RESPONDED QUICKLY ENOUGH TO GET A VECTOR-TRACE ON ONE OF THE FIST'S SHIPS BEFORE IT TRANSITED. ".

"THE TRACE LED US TO A REGION IN THE CANCERIAN SECTOR BEFORE IT FADED. "

"I COULD SEND IN A FLEET, BUT CHANCES ARE THE TERRORISTS WOULD BE WARNED OF ITS APPROACH. "

"A SINGLE SHIP, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL PROBABLY NOT AROUSE ANY SUSPICIONS. "

"SO, ASTRA, YOUR MISSION IS TO INFILTRATE THE CANCERIAN SECTOR, FIND THE VELVET FIST, AND TERMINATE THE TRAITOR. NO RESTRICTIONS THIS TIME."

"OF COURSE, YOU'LL BE WELL COMPENSATED IF ... WHEN YOU RETURN. "

Location: Helleski capital city of Phaaren-7, Carcerian Sector

Time Mission Day 0133

Astra: Wary

The last breaths of a dying revolutionary brought Astra here She knew, as he had, that her search would end in this city

She was wary because it had taken an effort to get to this point

—but not as much of an effort as she'd expected

Then again, she was the best, wasn't she?

Time to prove it Again

On the way up, she wondered what the Fist looked like. No one had ever gotten close enough to tell.

That was about to change

I not that it really mattered

When it was over, they all looked much the same.

HELLO, ASTA. I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU. YOU MADE VERY GOOD TIME.

ARE YOU GOING TO KILL ME NOW ?

TURN AROUND.

VERY UNPROFESSIONAL. HOW DISAPPOINTING

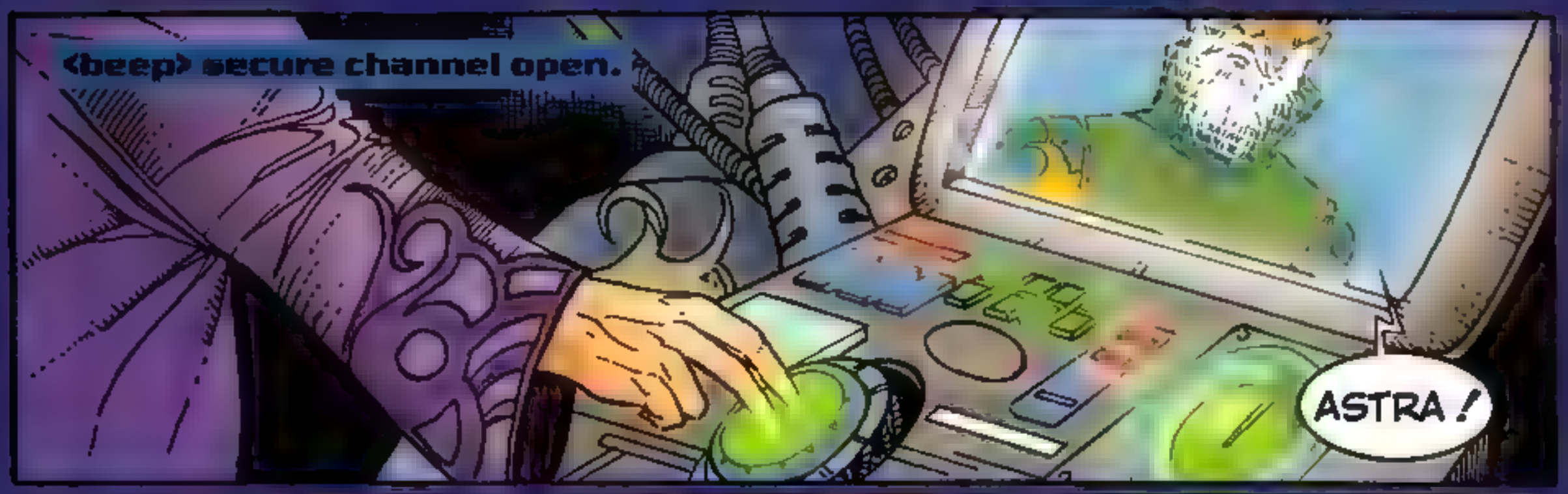
IT.. IT CAN'T BE !

YOU'RE ME !

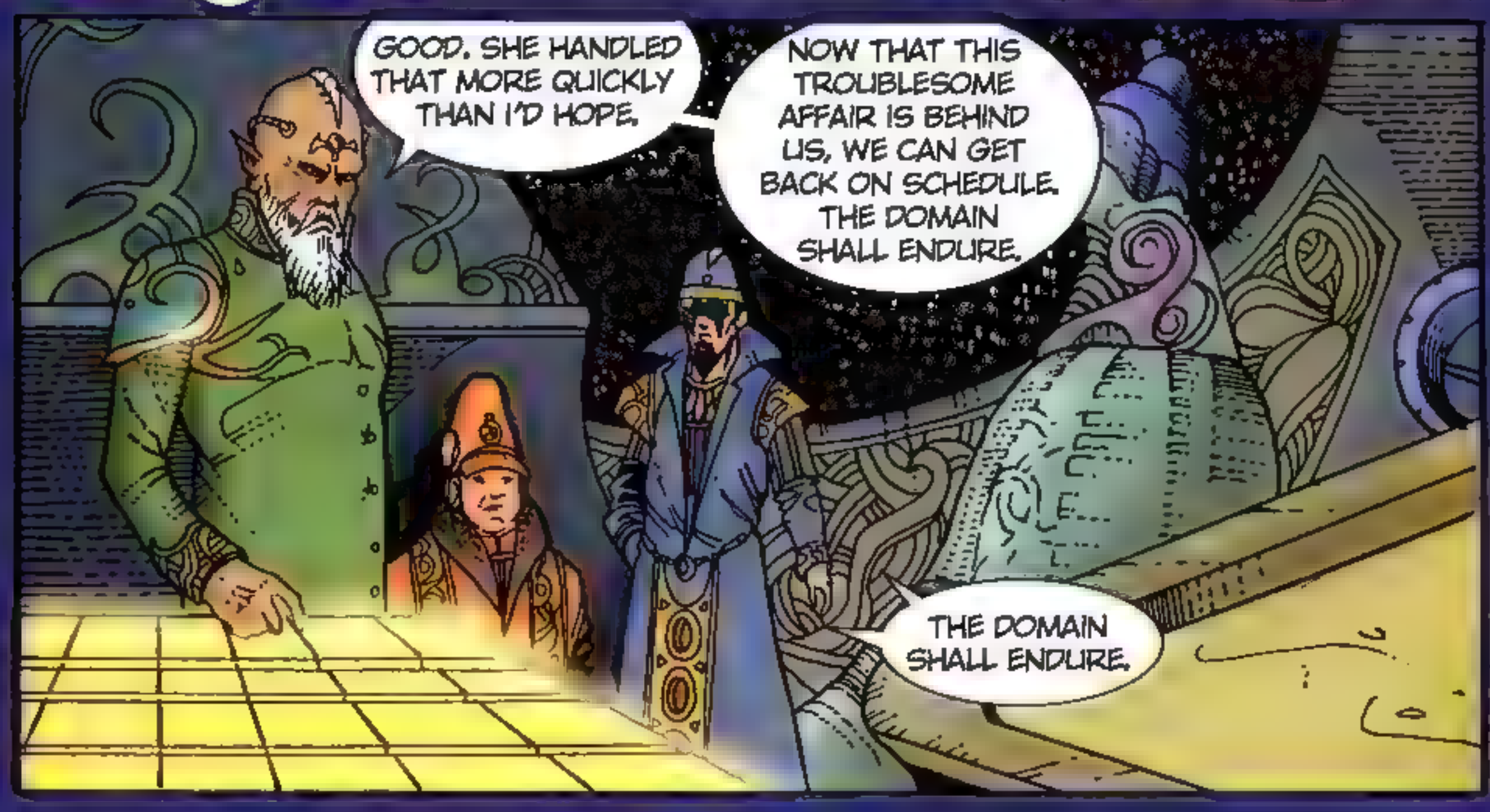
DOES IT TROUBLE YOU TO BE KILLING YOURSELF ?

NO TROUBLE AT ALL...

BLAM !


<beep> secure channel open.
ASTRA !

THIS IS A PLESANT SURPRISE.
I TRUST YOU WERE SUCCESSFUL ?
COMPLETELY. I'LL BE RETURNING SOON. HAVE MY CREDITS READY.
END TRANSMISSION.
FOOLS !


GOOD. SHE HANDLED THAT MORE QUICKLY THAN I'D HOPE.
NOW THAT THIS TROUBLESOME AFFAIR IS BEHIND US, WE CAN GET BACK ON SCHEDULE. THE DOMAIN SHALL ENDURE.
THE DOMAIN SHALL ENDURE.

She had known this day would come

She had known the only person the Prime would believe capable of stopping her was herself

Fortunately, she had prepared for that

The android had been complex and expensive
The elaborate deception that allowed it to live her former life had been outrageously complex and expensive

But it had been the only way Astra could gain the freedom to become the Velvet Fist, a person capable of bringing down the Domain

Now the Prime thought the last threat to his power was removed
That would make him less cautious

Now the final phase could begin

I WONDER IF THERE'S ANYTHING HUMAN LEFT IN THAT CREATURE... HE USED TO BE WILL... HE COULD HAVE HELPED ME!... BUT WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE HIM BECOME HIMSELF AGA N?... THEY STILL HAVEN'T GOT COMPLETE CONTROL OF H S MIND. .

WHO KNOWS?... IF I COULD AWAKEN SOME STRONG EMOTION IN HIM, MAYBE AN ORGASM... MHH... THAT MAY BE THE ANSWER .. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO AROUSE STRONG FEELINGS!

THAT WILL BE EASY . WILL WAS A VERY ATTRACTIVE MAN AND HIS BODY HASN'T CHANGED .. I FEEL LIKE TOUCHING HIM, KISSING HIM... MHH. . HE'S DRIVING ME CRAZY . AND I KEEP THINKING OF OBSCENITIES...

I WANT HIM...

BUT I MUST BE CAREFUL.. I MUSTN'T LET H M PENETRATE ME. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!... EVEN IF I'M MAD WITH DESIRE!

I HAVE TO STAY CALM!

MHH... HE'S SO WARM, SO ALIVE, SO BEAUTIFUL... AND HE RESPONDS SO WELL TO MY CARESSES!... BUT HIS BODY IS ICY COLD... AS COLD AS A CORPSE. IT'S STRANGE ..

... VERY STRAGE ...

I'M A BIT WORR'ED BY HIS CLAWS. I HOPE HE ISN'T GOING TO SCRATCH ME WITH THOSE THINGS!...

OOHH. . AHRG ..

YES, THAT'S IT! HE CAN FEEL ME! I CAN FEEL HIS BLOOD BEATING INSIDE MY MOUTH SO HE IS ALIVE, WILL IS ALIVE!

WILL, HELP ME! . CAN YOU HEAR ME? IT'S ME, DRUUNA.. THESE ARE MY HANDS... THIS IS MY MOUTH... CAN YOU FEEL THEM? .. HELP ME, WILL!

AH!... OHHH! . DRUUNA... I CAN FEEL YOUR MOUTH. IT'S SOFT AND HOT... OH, PLEASE, GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE LIFE... ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO DIE NOW .. HE'S SLOWLY KILLING ME... I... I CAN'T HELP YOU ANYMORE .. THE MACHINE... ONLY THE MACHINE, DRUUNA... LOOK FOR THE MACHINES. NOTHING ELSE CAN HELP YOU... IT'S ALL OVER FOR ME... DRUUNA!

TIP

YOU. ARE LIFE. THEY WANT LIFE. AAAHHH... COME. COME..

OH, WILL, MY LOVE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHERE ARE THE MACHINES YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT? TELL ME!

YES, WILL, I'D LIKE TO I WANT SO MUCH TO GIVE YOU PLEASURE. BUT I'M AFRAID OF THEM!

...I'M SCARED...

YES, WILL, I WILL MAKE [redacted] COME I WANT IT AS MUCH AS YOU.

LOVE ME, DRUUNA... FOR THE VERY LAST TIME... PLEASE. YOU MUSTN'T BE AFRAID OF "THEM", THE MONSTERS DON'T KNOW .. OUR SPECIES IS STERILE, REMEMBER?. . IT'S STERILE!

STERILE? OH GOD I'M OVERCOME WITH ANXIETY WHAT IF THIS MAN WERE JUST A HALLUCINATION?

AARGH AGH AH.

AH YES. YES.

OH OHHH ..

MHHH... AHHH...

MMHHH... IT FEELS SO GOOD! I CAN FEEL YOU AHH. I CAN FEEL YOU INSIDE ME. WILL CAN YOU FEEL ME? WILL. ANSWER ME! IT IS YOU, ISN'T IT?

ANSWER ME, WILL! ANSWER ME! IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT? TAKE THAT MASK OFF, DAMN IT .. I WANT TO SEE YOU!

ARGH...

AH . AAAHHH

OH!... YOU'RE NO LONGER WILL! YOU ARE DEAD... YOUR FACE IS ROTTING AWAY!... YOUR EYES ARE .. OH GOD, NOOOO!

AAAHHH!

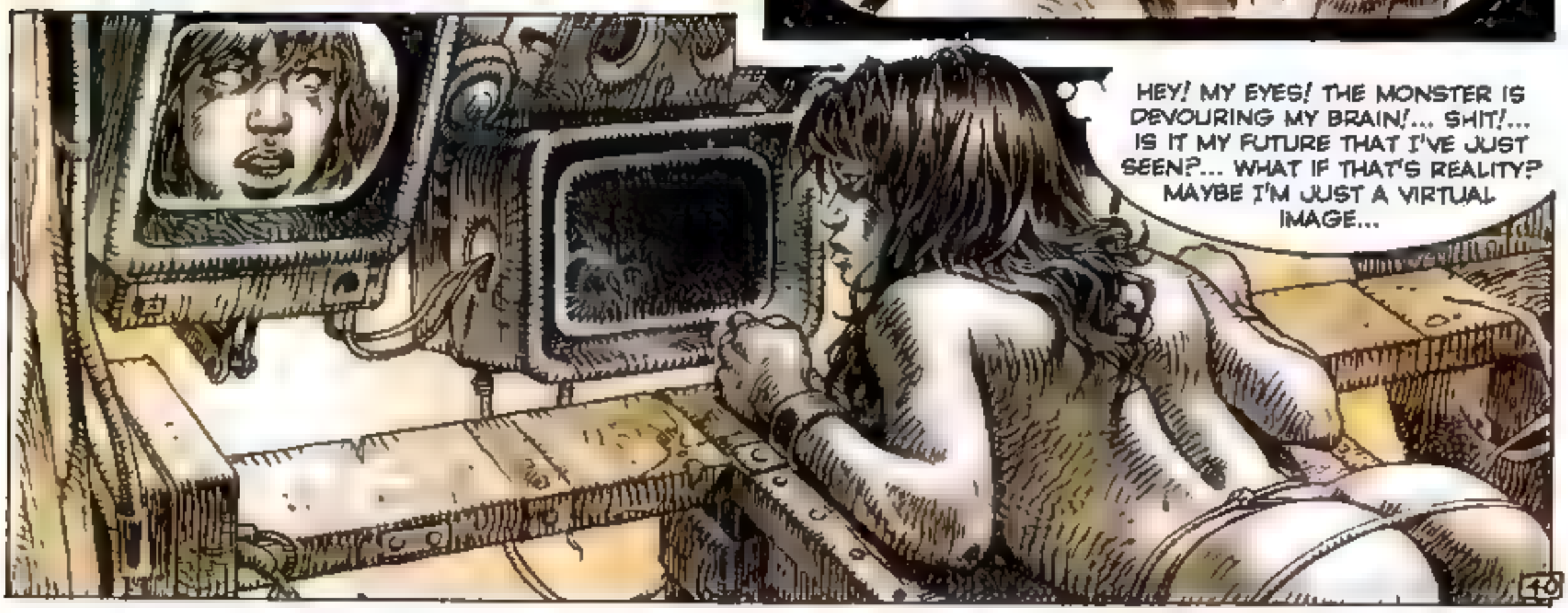
OH LORD! WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN? I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT! MY BACK DOESN'T HURT I CAN'T REMEMBER HAVING SEX WAS IT WILL?

I MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING... I'M GOING CRAZY!. I CAN'T REMEMBER ANY OF THE THINGS THEY'RE SHOWING ME... WHAT IF NONE OF IT EVER HAPPENED... OH SHIT, WHAT DO I CARE?!

WHY AM I TIED UP LIKE THIS?... AM I REAL OR AM I JUST A SIMULATION?... MAYBE I'M SOMEWHERE ELSE AND... I'M WATCHING MYSELF...

IT'S ALL TOO COMPLICATED! THE FILM GOES ON. WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO SHOW ME NOW?

UGH! WHAT ARE THEY? THEY LOOK LIKE COCOONS!


HEY! MY EYES! THE MONSTER IS DEVOURING MY BRAIN!... SHIT!... IS IT MY FUTURE THAT I'VE JUST SEEN?... WHAT IF THAT'S REALITY? MAYBE I'M JUST A VIRTUAL IMAGE...

THAT WOULD MEAN THAT I HAVE BEEN. WHAT DID THEY CALL IT? "CONVERTED" OH, NOOOO!

VIRTUAL OR NOT, THE DISGUSTING MONSTER HOVERING OVER ME IS REAL

...?!...

TAC, TAC, TAC ..
TIC.. TIC . TIC
TLAC .

WHO ARE YOU? DON'T COME NEAR ME... STAY AWAY FROM ME! STOP!

TAC, TAC, TAC...
TUC, TUC, TUC...
TLAC

TAC, TAC, TAC...
TIC, TIC, TIC.
TLAC...

DON'T TOUCH ME GO AWAY STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? GET DOWN!

TLAC, TLAC, TLAC... TAC, TAC, TAC... TIC, TIC, TIC..

AHHH.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

OH... IT'S SINGEING THE STRAPS THAT BIND ME . IT'S FREEING ME!

TAC... TIC, TIC, TIC... TLAC...

AH!.

IT'S COMING TOWARD ME!...

TIC, TAC, TLAC .

I'M OUT OF HERE!

TLAC.

TAC TAC.

TIC .. TIC... TIC...

TAC TAC
TAC TIC
TIC TIC

THERE GONE!

WOW .. RIGHT UNDER ME.. A BOTTOMLESS PIT!

TLAC TLAC
TLAC TAC
TAC TAC
TLAC TLAC

WHAT DOES THIS "THING" WANT FROM ME NOW? OKAY. SO IT FREED ME BUT I MUST BE CAREFUL BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY

I HAD THE FEELING IT WAS STARING AT ME OUT OF THAT STRANGE EYE, BUT IT JUST WALKED AWAY AS IF I DIDN'T EXIST .. MAYBE IT WANTS ME TO FOLLOW IT

IS THAT THE EXIT? HEY! I'M TALKING TO YOU! SHOULD I FOLLOW YOU?

TIC, TIC, TIC.. TLAC.

SO NOW I'M BLABBERING AWAY TO AN IRON CRAB. I'M GOING NUTS! ANYWAY, I HAVE NO CHOICE .. I MUST FOLLOW IT

TAC, TAC, TAC TLAC.

WHERE IS IT GOING? PHEW! I'LL HAVE TO WADE THROUGH THAT DISGUSTING SLUSH UGH! HERE GOES NOTHING!

YUCK! I FEEL LIKE I'M WALKING ON SLIMY CREATURES .. GROSS! I JUST HOPE THEY'RE NOT DANGEROUS

DAMN! THERE'S SOMEONE THERE! WHO WHO COULD IT BE?

ANOTHER WEIRD THING!

TLAC TLAC TLAC

CLICK I UNDERSTAND YOUR SURPRISE THIS WONDERFUL METALLIC BODY ENCLOSES UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE AND MY INTELLIGENCE REALLY IS SUPERIOR.

TLAAAC!

I BELIEVE YOU I THOUGHT SO TOO! ..

WHO ARE YOU? . YOU REMIND ME OF SOMEONE BUT WHO? YOUR FACE SEEMS REASSURING

QUICK! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE . THEY'LL BE BACK SOON

THE WATER IS GETTING DEEPER [illegible]

BUT... HOW COME YOU'RE HERE?

HMM... AN INTERESTING QUESTION. I WONDER WHY MYSELF YOU KNOW? BUT THE MORE I THINK, THE MORE CONFUSED MY CIRCUITS GET... THERE ARE A FEW TECHNICAL DETAILS TO BE STRAIGHTENED OUT

BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE PERFECT

HEE, HEE, HEE... TH S WAY!

HEY, GENTLY, YOU HEAP OF JUNK META..!

I NEED SOME CLOTHES! OR I'LL HAVE TO KEEP HIDING FROM THOSE SEX-CRAZED MACH NES!

HEE, HEE, HEE

HEY, GO SLOWLY, YOU OLD WRECK! DO WE REALLY HAVE TO WADE THROUGH THIS D'SGUSTING STUFF?

IT'S SAFER. THEY DON'T L KE IT. AND

AND WHAT ABOUT THESE GUYS? HAD YOU THOUGHT OF THEM, YOU TIN CAN WITH BRAINS?

NO, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM. THEY WON'T HARM YOU. YOU'RE ALIVE! YOU'RE FRESH YOUNG FLESH! THEY HAVE SPECIAL EATING HABITS. THEY ONLY LIKE DEAD MEAT.

DEAD MEAT?... I HOPE THEY DON'T CHANGE THEIR EATING HABITS TODAY!

WE'VE BEEN WADING IN SLUSH FOR AN HOUR! I'M EXHAUSTED.

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO REST WHEN WE GET TO THE TOP. WE'LL BE SAFE THERE.

UP THERE???!!!

BRR... IT'S COLD... LISTEN, WHAT'S-YOUR-NAME. YOU'VE FOUND THIS HORRIBLE COFFEE IN YOUR BACKPACK. WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE ANYTHING ELSE IN THERE, SOMETHING I COULD WEAR?

AS SOON AS WE LEAVE, YOU'LL BE SAFE. THEY DON'T DARE COME HERE. HMM, CLOTHES? YES. I THINK SO. I MUST HAVE SOMETHING HERE!

YOU CALL THESE CLOTHES?

THEY FIT ME FINE!

BUT YOU'RE A DWARF ..

WHAT DO THOSE CREATURES WANT FROM ME?

THEY WANT WHAT EVERYONE WANTS: LIFE! IN ORDER TO LIVE, FIGHT, SURVIVE, THEY NEED MEN... AND I DON'T THINK THERE ARE ANY LEFT!

BUT I'M A WOMAN AND A WOMAN WHO STILL DOESN'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING HERE, WHO CAN'T REMEMBER HER OBSCURE PAST WHO HAS A SCRAMBLED BRAIN AND NO IDENTITY! WHAT CAN THEY POSSIBLY DO WITH ME?

YOU'RE HUMAN... ALIVE... AND YOU'VE HAD... HMM .. HOW DO YOU HUMANS CALL IT?... SEX... YOU'VE MADE LOVE WITH THAT GUY WILLIAMSON. . YOU ARE SPECIAL YOU ARE PREGNANT . HA, HA, HA

WHAAAT??? PREGNANT? ARROGANT HEAP OF JUNK METAL! WILL WAS SOME SORT OF CYBORG, AND WE'VE ALL KNOWN SINCE THE 20TH CENTURY THAT CYBORGS ARE STERILE!

SPANG!

UH.

THEY ARE DUMBER THAN THE 20TH-CENTURY CYBORGS, SO THEY DON'T KNOW THAT! OH, YES HA, HA, HA.

BUT .. YOU'RE A MACHINE... HOW DO YOU KNOW I HAD SEX WITH THAT MAN?

MACHINES HAVE EYES EVERYWHERE THEY WATCH EVERYTHING LOOKING FOR LIFE IN EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY

YES, YES. BUT I'M HUMAN AND I NEED TO GET SOME SLEEP NOW I CAN'T EVEN SEE STRAIGHT TO SLEEP, TO SLEEP.

TAC, TAC, TAC TLAAC.

TAC, TLAC, TRONF? TRONF? RONF .. RONF...

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE SOON, MY FRIEND. THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

DRUUNA

HEY! YES. I BUT WHAT WHO ARE YOU? OH.

I WAS DREAMING IT WAS ONLY A DREAM. YET I KNOW I HEARD MY NAME HE CALLED ME HE LOOKED AT ME IT WAS SO REAL!

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HIS VOICE... ECHOING IN MY HEAD . IT WOKE ME!

VISIONS... DREAMS... HALLUCINATIONS .. MY MIND IS A CONFUSED JUMBLE! SLEEPING WON'T HELP DAY HAS DAWNED IT'S TIME TO GO!

HEY, NUTS AND BOLTS .. WAKE UP! WE HAVE TO GET MOVING!

WHAT?!

HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN STANDING THERE? OH GOD, NO!

HEY, HEY, YOU OLD THING! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?.. WAKE UP! ARE YOU DEAD? OH SHIT THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!

?

SSSSSHH

SSSTBOM

NOW I'M IN A WAR ZONE!

TUMP TUMP BOUMBAUM

COME WITH ME! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

HELP! THEY'RE SHOOTING LIKE MADMEN... BUT, STRANGELY, THEY AREN'T FIRING AT ME

TUMP TA-TA-TA-TA BOUM BOOUM

GET OUT OF MY WAY!

!...

...

I'M SORRY, I . BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN STANDING THERE!

LET ME SEE IF I CAN HOT-WIRE THIS THING WHERE'S THE STEERING WHEEL?!

HOW CAN I GET THE DAMN THING TO START UP?! HEY... METALLIC SPIDER, WE GOTTA GO!!

...?!...

WOW! IT'S FAST!... WE'RE GOING UP... ISN'T IT SHAKING A BIT TOO MUCH?

OH, NO! A MECHANICAL SYRINGE . CAN'T SAY THAT'S VERY REASSUR NG!

UGH!

UMM, I SLEPT SO WELL... SO WHAT'S NEW?

L STEN, YOU RUSTY OLD WRECK! D'YOU TH NK THAT WAS THE R GHT TIME TO FALL ASLEEP? THOSE WE RD WHITE-EYED CREATURES WITH CAPES ALMOST K LLED ME!

HA, HA, HA! I TOLD YOU NOT TO BE AFRAID OF THEM. THEY NEED YOU ALIVE... FOR THEIR OWN SURVIVAL.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! SUCH A VAST CITY .. AND YET IT'S DESERTED!

OH .. YOU KNOW WE'RE EVERYWHERE AND BESIDES, YOU SHOULDN'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU SEE

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

LOOK! THAT'S WHERE I COME FROM THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED TO KNOW, RIGHT?

YES, I ASKED YOU THAT YESTERDAY! OH, WHAT IS IT? IT'S HORRENDOUS!

HORRENDOUS? WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I DON'T THINK IT'S UGLY YESTERDAY? WHAT'S YESTERDAY?

YESTERDAY THAT'S TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AGO. BEFORE... NOT NOW!

WHAT? YOU SAY THINGS THAT DON'T MAKE ANY SENSE

THERE! SMOOTH LANDINGS ARE MY SPECIALTY! DID YOU SEE THAT? AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER!

YEAH, SURE SOME FEATHER! YOU CALL THAT A LANDING?

OKAY, LET'S GO!

HEY, YOU'RE DOING IT AGAIN!

NO, NOT REALLY I JUST WANTED TO HMM THIS OUTFIT LOOKS GREAT ON YOU . HURRY! IT'S GETTING LATE!

LATE? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT WORD!

BIOLOGICAL MOLECULAR ACCUMULATION, AND A FEMALE TO BOOT! OH DEAR...

HEY, YOU OLD TIN CAN! WHAT ARE YOU BLABBERING ON ABOUT? I CAN'T HEAR YOU.

OH .. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME? I FEEL AFRAID AND ANXIOUS... WHAT COULD BE BEHIND THAT DOOR?

A STRANGE BUZZING INSIDE MY HEAD. . I ONCE KNEW WHAT USED TO BE HERE. AND THAT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING WAS WAITING FOR ME.

COME ON, DON'T JUST STAND THERE! FOLLOW ME!

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IT'S A CHAMBER OF HORRORS! WHAT ARE THEY?

WHAT ARE THEY? THEY'RE THE PREDECESSORS OF YOUR WHITE-EYED FRIENDS... MACHINES ARE STRONG, BUT HUMANS ARE COMPLICATED... THEY DON'T ALWAYS SUCCEED LIKE THEY SHOULD. THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING MISSING. ESPECIALLY ORGANIC MATTER.

LOOK AT THAT, FOR EXAMPLE. IT'S THE FIRST PROTOTYPE ACTUALLY, THE SECOND. THE FIRST ONE DISAPPEARED. IT WAS VERY BIG. YES. IT WAS A BAD STORY!

AH, YES, I SAW IT. I REMEMBER! IT WAS HUGE AND REALLY DISGUSTING!

"THE GREAT MOTHER"? YOU THINK YOU SAW THE GREAT MOTHER? NO, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. NO ONE'S EVER SEEN HER. WHAT YOU SAW WAS A VIRTUAL IMAGE, LIKE SO MANY OF THE OTHER THINGS THAT YOU'VE SEEN... THEY DON'T EXIST. PROJECTIONS, COMPUTERIZED HALLUCINATIONS. NOTHING OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE.

THE ADVENTISTS OF THE "I DON'T KNOW WHAT" ARE IN POWER DOWN THERE. THEY ALWAYS USE OLD FORMS OF HUMAN TECHNOLOGY, AND... WHO KNOWS? THEY COULD BE VIRTUAL, TOO!

THAT'S CRAZY! SO IT'S ALL FICTION, HUH? ARE THE SPIDER-SHAPED CREATURES VIRTUAL, TOO?

AND WHAT ABOUT THE HUMANS? ARE THE HUMANS REAL?

THE SPIDER-SHAPED CREATURES ARE REAL. THE WHITE EYES ARE REAL, TOO, AND I'M REAL... AND HANDSOME AS YOU CAN SEE! AND IF THERE WERE ANY MEN... THEY WOULD BE REAL, TOO. BUT NOT FOR LONG.

NOT FOR LONG?

THAT'S RIGHT .. THE SPIDERS NEED THEM IN ORDER TO SURVIVE. IN ANY CASE, NOTHING WORKED THE WAY IT SHOULD. THE MACHINES... AH, THAT'S ANOTHER STORY! THE MACHINES ARE PERFECT! JUST LOOK AT ME!

DRUUNA, YOU ARE HERE... WITH ME...

WHAT? THAT VOICE INSIDE MY HEAD AGAIN! SO YOU'RE... IS IT YOU? OH, MY GOD, IS IT YOU?

COME...

OH, HOW COULD I... HOW COULD I FORGET?... YOU DIDN'T FORGET ME... YOU ARE ALIVE... SO MANY MEMORIES... THEY HURT ME...

THE MACHINES ARE INDESTRUCTIBLE!... EVEN IF SOMETHING BREAKS, THEY CAN ALWAYS BE REPAIRED. NOT SO WITH HUMANS. THE PERFECT HUMAN HAS TO BE MECHANICAL, SO AS TO LIMIT THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE PASSING OF TIME.

?..

MAN IS MORE THAN THAT, YOU BAG OF NUTS AND BOLTS! HUMANS ARE KNOWLEDGE, LOVE, REASONING!...

DON'T GET ANGRY. I'M GETTING THERE. SO ACCORDING TO YOU, MACHINES DON'T THINK? HOW COULD THEY BUILD WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE?

YEAH, SURE!

WHAT IS THAT OVER THERE?

MY GOD! I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EYES!... IS IT REAL?

YES, WHAT YOU SEE IS REALITY... ALL OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE IS STORED IN THIS PLACE, IN THIS MACHINE'S NETWORK, IN ITS MODULES, PROCESSORS, ELEMENTS... THE MACHINE IS GOOD... IT LOVES MAN...

IT LOVES MAN! BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT ONE?! DID IT DO THAT OUT OF LOVE?

THE MACHINE LOVES MAN, BECAUSE WITHOUT MAN IT WOULD HAVE NO REASON FOR BEING!... FATHERS NEED THEIR SONS, AND THAT'S WHY IT HAS MADE ME IN MAN'S IMAGE... MAN WHO WAS THE CREATOR OF THE FIRST MACHINE.

OH DRUUNA, MY DEAR, YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL. I'M STANDING BEFORE YOU. THEY ARE REGENERATING ME. IT'S PAINFUL AND MARVELOUS AT THE SAME TIME.

OH, SHASTAR, MY LOVE... I'M GOING CRAZY. IT'S YOU. YOU ARE ALIVE!... YOU ARE COMMUNICATING WITH ME THROUGH THOUGHT...

BUT SOMETHING'S MISSING... SOMETHING THE MACHINE HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN CREATING: LIFE... BUT NOW WE ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH...

SHASTAR, I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHERE ARE YOU? THE CREATURE BEFORE ME SPEAKS IN AN OBSCURE MANNER. WHAT MUST I DO? I'M AFRAID!...

I'M INSIDE THIS CREATURE, DRUUNA. THE MACHINE CAN'T USE TELEPATHY. I CAN. SO I AM COMMUNICATING WITH YOU. PLEASE COME CLOSER, IF YOU WANT TO HELP ME. PLEASE TOUCH ME.

CARESS ME. I NEED YOU. DON'T BE AFRAID.

YES, YES... YOU'RE SO COLD!...

THAT'S WHY I NEED YOUR WARMTH.

...?...

AAHH... NO, NO, LET ME GO... NO! SHASTAR! HELP!

FORGIVE ME, DRUUNA, BUT I HAVE TO...

SO YOU... YOU, SHASTAR, YOU HAVE BETRAYED ME! I'M CHOKING... NO... AAH...

OH, MY GOD... NO... WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO ME? NO... NOT THAT!...

WHERE AM I?... AND HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN HERE? I MUST HAVE SLEPT FOR AGES... I FEEL A BIT FUNNY...

I HAVE A STRANGE FEELING OF WELL-BEING... I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO ME. I FEEL PHYSICALLY REGENERATED... AND YET THERE IS SOMETHING... YES... SOMETHING THAT I FEEL DEEP INSIDE ME... SOMETHING COLD, LIKE ICE... IT'S A FEELING I'M UNABLE TO DEFINE...

OH, GOD! IT CAN'T BE! THE CITY HAS DISAPPEARED! WHERE DID IT GO TO?

I SWITCHED THE CITY OFF! IT WAS ONLY AN ILLUSION. HUMANS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO KNOW... REALITY IS ELSEWHERE... BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS.

EVERYTHING IS AN ILLUSION, AND IT'S BEEN SO FOR A LONG TIME... SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN EXISTENCE...

SHASTAR! OH SHASTAR! IT'S YOU, IT'S REALLY YOU! I KNEW IT! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE ABANDONED ME!... OH MY DEAR, YOU ARE ALIVE!... BUT HOW DID YOU MANAGE IT?

I DIDN'T DO IT. IT'S THANKS TO YOU AND THE MACHINES. THAT'S WHY THEY MADE ME BRING YOU HERE. PART OF YOU WAS NEEDED FOR THE REGENERATION... BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG... THIS SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED.

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND! YOU LOOK ALMOST HUMAN AND... YOU LOOK GREAT!...

OUR THOUGHTS, OUR FEELINGS... OUR MEMORIES... ARE HUMAN, BUT OUR BODIES AREN'T ANYMORE!

SHASTAR!... WHAT HAPPENED TO MY FACE?!

MY GOD, OH MY GOD!... NO... NO... IT'S METAL! WHERE'S MY FACE?... MY FACE?...

WITH OUR BODIES!...

WE WILL GO AND GET THEM... I PROMISE, DRUUNA!... AND THEN YOU'LL SEE... WE'LL MANAGE TO ESCAPE FROM HERE...

OH, SHASTAR, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?... WHERE COULD WE GO? NOTHING WILL EVER BE LIKE IT WAS BEFORE... LOOK AT ME... IT'S OVER... NOTHING EXISTS ANYMORE... NOTHING... YOU SAID IT, IT'S ALL FALSE, IT'S ALL ILLUSION!

HORROR IS ILLUSION, THE MACHINES DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO ANYTHING ELSE... FOR THEM, REALITY IS TOO SIMPLE... THEY CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE IT...

BUT, OUR THOUGHTS ARE HUMAN... AND SO IS OUR THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE... LOOK, I KNOW THAT OVER THERE, BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS, THERE EXISTS SOMETHING, SOMETHING SO DIFFERENT... DIFFERENT FROM ALL THIS...

THERE EXISTS A PLANET WHERE IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO LIVE, THINK, LOVE... AN ANCIENT PLANET... A FORGOTTEN PLANET...